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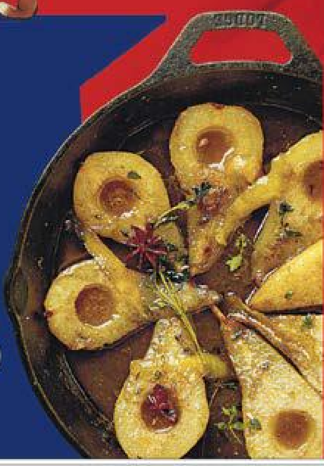

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Unions accuse ministers of causing festive travel chaos

Gwyn Topham
Peter Walker

Millions of Britons are facing a potentially chaotic Christmas getaway amid strikes on railways and by airport border staff, with unions accusing ministers of causing the disruption by "going missing" rather than negotiating over pay.

The AA said motorists faced "a traffic nightmare before Christmas" at the start of the festive weekend, as heavy rain and flooding added to the disruption caused by widespread industrial action.

Most rail services will end by 3pm today, as thousands of members of the RMT at Network Rail begin a strike three hours later, with the stoppage lasting until 6am on Tuesday. Final intercity trains on most long-distance routes trains will depart between 8am and 1pm, while some routes will not operate at all.

The RMT has said it is not targeting Christmas travel, as no passenger trains normally run on Christmas Day, with very limited services on Boxing Day. But the rail industry said the timing of the strike meant passenger trains would need to be in depots before the action started.

The RMT accused ministers of "going missing", with no further negotiations having taken place since the union and industry leaders met the rail minister, Huw Merriman, last week.

The union's general secretary, Mick Lynch, said: "Until the government gives the rail industry a mandate to come to a negotiated settlement on job security, pay and conditions of work, our industrial campaign will continue."

The army took over passport control duties at six airports around Britain yesterday – Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and

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MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: KIRAN RIDLEY/GETTY

Three killed in Paris gun attack

A 69-year-old man was arrested after a shooting at a Kurdish centre in the French capital in which three died and three were injured. **News** *Page 25* →

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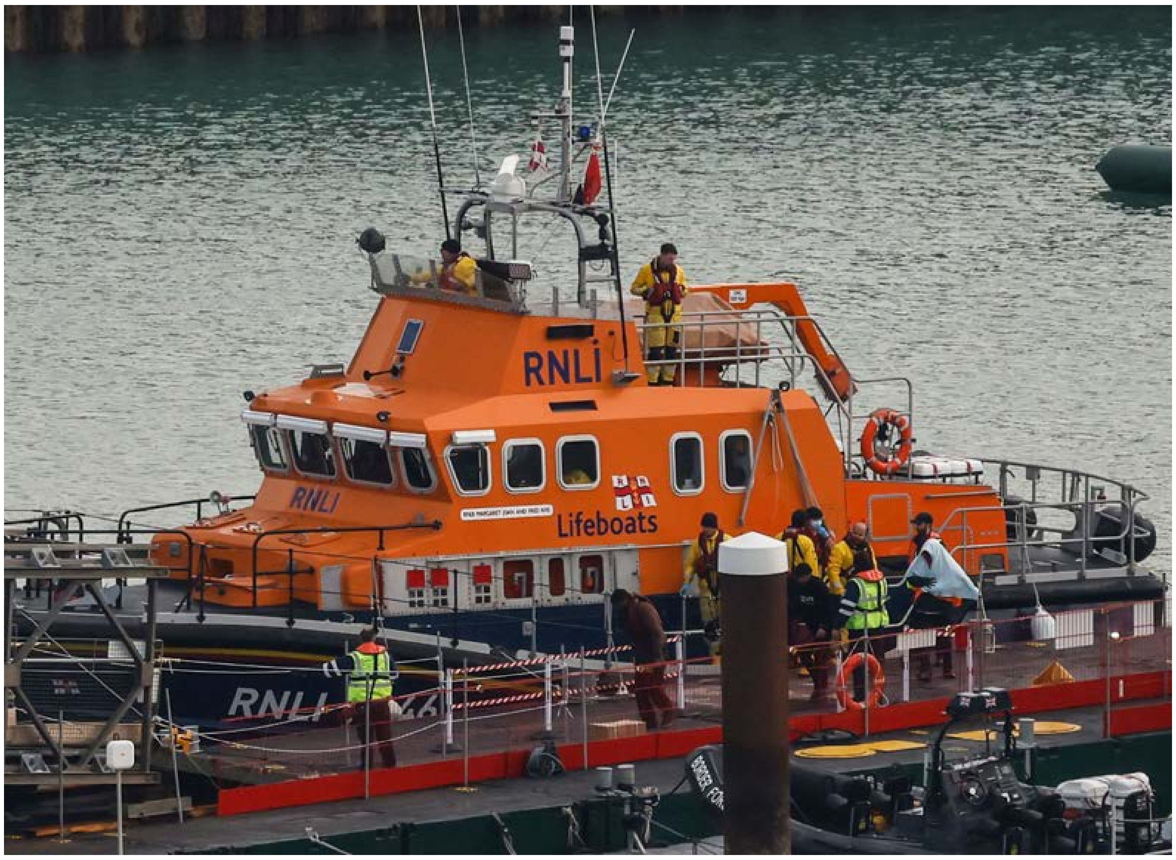
News



▼ *People being escorted off a lifeboat in Dover after they were rescued from the Channel on 14 December*
PHOTOGRAPH: CARLOS JASSO/AFP/GETTY

Channel boat tragedy victims thought to be Afghan and Senegalese

Diane Taylor

Four people who died when a small boat capsized in the Channel this month are believed to be of Afghan and Senegalese heritage, an inquest into their deaths has heard.

The four men’s identities have not yet been confirmed, the coroner’s court in Maidstone, Kent, was told yesterday. The first male, believed to be Afghan, was confirmed dead at 6.22am on 14 December. The second, believed to be Senegalese, was confirmed dead at 6.25am, the third, believed to be Senegalese, at 8.30am and the fourth, believed to be Afghan, at 11.24am. All four deaths were found to be consistent with drowning.

Of the 39 survivors, a dozen were unaccompanied children who were taken into care by Kent county council. Two were airlifted to hospital after experiencing freezing conditions in the water. On the day the dinghy capsized, 401 people crossed the Channel in eight boats.

Many of the survivors were taken first to the Western Jet Foil facility in Dover for medical checks and then spent three days at Manston reception centre near Ramsgate, where initial checks are carried out on people arriving on small boats.

The site has been the subject of various controversies including outbreaks of diphtheria and scabies, drug use by guards, severe overcrowding, allegations of assaults, and some people dumped in central London after being discharged from the site.

A spokesperson for Soas Detainee Support, which campaigns against detention of small boat arrivals at Manston, said: “Manston is a completely inappropriate place to hold people who have just crossed the Channel and witnessed four of their fellow passengers die in the cold waters. There is copious evidence from politicians, inspectors and ex-detainees themselves that the facility is not fit for human habitation and is not a safe place for people seeking safety and sanctuary.”

The area coroner for central and south-east Kent, Katrina Hepburn, opened the inquest, reading out a report from DI Ross Gurden from Kent police. He said the dinghy had been recovered and “was wholly unsuitable to make the crossing”.

The death toll could have been higher had it not been for the efforts of the crew of the fishing trawler Arcturus, who discovered the migrants clinging to inflatable vessels in the icy waters.

“It was like something out of a second world war movie. There were people in the water everywhere, screaming,” the boat’s skipper, Raymond Strachan, told Sky News.

The crew of the trawler are believed to have saved 31 of the 39 people rescued.

The tragedy came just over a year after at least 27 people drowned when their boat capsized in one of the deadliest accidents in the Channel in recent years.

The number of people crossing the Channel has increased sharply during 2022. More than 45,000 migrants have made the crossing so far this year, compared with 28,526 for all of 2021 and 8,404 in 2020, according to government figures.

A Home Office spokesperson said: “People rescued from this tragic incident were treated by medical specialists immediately after landing. Manston functions to process asylum seekers securely and has 24/7 facilities with trained medical staff.

“We ensure the safety and security of those in our care before they are moved onto alternative accommodation.”

Kent police have launched a criminal investigation into the deaths. After opening the inquests the coroner suspended them because criminal charges may be brought in relation to the four deaths.

Investigation after surgeons leave forceps inside patient

Matthew Weaver

A hospital is investigating how a pair of metal surgical forceps were left inside a patient after they had been stitched up following abdominal surgery.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS trust has apologised unreservedly and said the incident at Alexandra hospital, Redditch, was “exceptionally rare”.

The medical blunder only became apparent after a seven-hour abdominal procedure last month, according to BBC Midlands, when the forceps were reported to be missing.

The worst fears of medics were confirmed when the missing 15cm arterial clamp was found by an X-ray while the patient was still under anaesthetic.

The surgical instrument could not be immediately removed and the patient was moved to intensive care overnight before another operation was performed the next day to retrieve the clamp.

It is understood the investigation will look at whether the required double-checking of all instruments was conducted before the patient was stitched up. It will also examine the end-of-operation signing-out process, which is supposed to ensure such errors do not happen.

The trust said there were “clear and well-established processes” in place to prevent such incidents.

The trust’s chief executive, Matthew Hopkins, said: “We are aware of an incident which involved a surgical instrument being left inside a patient following surgery.

“There are clear and well-established processes in place to protect patients from this kind of event, which are exceptionally rare.

“We are currently carrying out an investigation into what happened.

“The patient and their family have been informed as part of our duty of candour. We have apologised unreservedly to the patient and promised to share the findings of our investigation with them once it is completed.”

More than a decade ago it was estimated that an average of two operations a week ended with surgical instruments being sewn inside patients’ bodies. Since then, hospitals have been required to publish quarterly statistics of these incidents.

A message from the editor in chief

I wanted to give you an update on why your newspaper today might look a bit different, and might be missing a few things you usually find inside.

Earlier this week, we were hit by a serious IT incident. It has affected us in many different ways, one of which is that some of our newspaper design and layout systems have been challenged. This has made producing the newspaper more difficult.

Thanks to the hard work of Guardian colleagues we have been able to keep publishing the news 24/7 on our website and apps, and to keep publishing the newspaper every day.

We have already received many supportive messages from readers – thank you. We appreciate our readers’ support all year round – we absolutely could not do it without you – and we ask for your patience as we work to resolve these issues.

In the meantime, we wish all of our readers a joyful festive season. With you, we are looking forward to a more hopeful and peaceful 2023.
Katharine Viner

Let the smells ring out - the strange history of clove, cinnamon and other festive fragrances

◀ Oranges stuffed with cloves were used to ward off disease before they became a festive favourite
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

Nicola Davis
Science correspondent

The waft of pine trees and cinnamon biscuits may mean it is beginning to smell a lot like Christmas, but the odours that conjure up yuletide today may not always have had such joyful connotations, research has revealed.

Experts studying records of smells described in texts dating as far back as the 16th century say they have discovered the scents we associate with Christmas have shifted over time.

An orange studded with cloves may be a classic festive fragrance today, but in the 17th century it could also have triggered associations with the plague.

While such spices and fruits were used then in food preparation, cloves were also put inside pomanders - either metal balls or hollowed-out oranges - which were "mainly used to protect against disease in the 17th century", said Dr William Tullett of Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, the author of Smell in Eighteenth-Century England.

"None other than Henry VIII's Cardinal Wolsey was said to have carried an orange stuffed with spices to cover up the smells of lawyers and plaintiffs that crowded Westminster Hall," he added.

Over time, the combination of oranges and cloves faded from written sources, only to re-emerge in the 20th century when dried clove-stuffed oranges, often covered in cinnamon, nutmeg and clove oil, came back into fashion. "That seems to [have] become a Christmas thing," said Tullett.

The shift in the association of oranges and cloves away from disease was key - meaning the scents became firmly linked to settings such as the kitchen. "The spices are being used in food in the 17th century. But what changes is that once we get to the end of the 18th century, people no longer believe that the smells of spices and herbs could do anything for you medically," said Tullett. "So all that's left for this stuff is [for it to] be used for food and making your home smell nice."

▲ A Christmas feast, circa 1800; right, mulled wine being prepared with cinnamon and cloves
PHOTOGRAPHS: SSPL, ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTY

Indeed, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg and other spices had long been used for culinary purposes, including in gingerbread and mulled wine, while their link to the festive season may also have developed from an earlier association with the new year.

Tullett said the findings came from a search of a database known as the "Smell Explorer" that contains 218,903 text extracts dating from the 16th to the 20th centuries. The resource was created as part of the Odeuropa project, of which Tullett is a member, which uses artificial intelligence to scour written records for the smells of the past.

Tullett added that other scents appeared to have lost their Christmas associations, noting that rosemary was once commonly associated with yuletide - as recorded by the 18th-century poet John Gay in his book Trivia.

"He has a bit where he says: 'When rosemary, and bays, the poets' crown, Are bawled, in frequent cries, through all the town; Then judge the festival of Christmas near,'" said Tullett.

Other texts also cite the herb. "One famous 16th-century Christmas carol celebrated the serving of a boar's head on Christmas tables 'bedeck'd with bays and rosemary'," Tullett added.

But some things have not changed. Tullett said that a play from 1679 written by John Fletcher and performed at the royal court at Christmas, contains a line in which a character, referring to someone who has been drinking, says: "He stinks of Muscadelle, like an English Christmas."

Muscadelle was a sweet wine, said Tullett, adding that it was associated with the festive period not least because it was often used in wassail bowls: "So that idea of getting so drunk that you just smell of alcohol as being part of Christmas seems to go back all the way to the 17th century."

Woman charges relatives for providing Christmas dinner

Kevin Rawlinson

It may be the season of plenty, but with a house full of family and friends to feed and a cost of living crisis to contend with, Christmas budgets are tighter than ever. With that in mind, one grandmother has come up with a way to ease the burden of 25 December: charge her guests for dinner.

Caroline Duddridge devised a tiered fee system for her relatives that, this year, has brought in about £180 to help cover the cost of turkey and all the trimmings for her five adult children and their families.

"There's a few out there who think I'm a bit of a Scrooge but my friends think it's quite a good idea," Duddridge, 63, told BBC Radio 5 Live.

She said she had the idea after the death of her husband in 2015 left her with only half the household income to live on. She initially asked relatives to put away small amounts regularly towards the end of the year, but the administration became too cumbersome.

"I said to my children, 'right, it costs a lot of money, I'm going to do a little kitty jar so you can put £2 away starting in September'. It sounds good, doesn't it? But of course it all got a bit shambolic, trying to keep track of them, and there were a few stragglers."

Instead, the teaching assistant from Fairwater in Cardiff decided to charge her two sons £15 each and her three daughters £10, while her four grandchildren aged five and older were charged £5 each and her two three-year-old grandchildren paid £2.50, with the one-off fees to be transferred to her bank account.

She explained that she charged her sons more because they work full-time, while her daughters work part-time and care for their families.

And she joked there was little sentimentality to spare. "If you don't pay by 1 December, you're not coming. Obviously there were a few moans and grumbles, saying I've got a few children, but at the end of the day that's not my problem really, is it?"

▲ Caroline Duddridge: 'It's very fair. I'm not out to make a profit'

Duddridge said that about half of the money she had raised was spent on meat, which she said she "doesn't even eat".

She said in the past she had "always ended up with hundreds of sausage rolls and bags of potatoes but not much else" because her relatives would bring food.

She concluded: "Why should the host hold the full financial burden? I'm hoping that people won't think it's a terrible thing and think 'hmm, that is a good idea'. It's very fair. I'm not out to make a profit: I'm doing it just to have a bit of help with the cost of it."

Unions accuse ministers of causing travel chaos by refusing to negotiate

Continued *from page 1*

Cardiff – as Border Force officials started eight days of strikes over the festive period.

The worst of the feared problems for inbound passengers, who had been told to expect long queues and possible disruption, did not materialise, with some passengers at Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester all claiming to have got through the immigration hall more quickly than usual.

But the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) said the action would escalate in the new year unless pay deals were reached.

With officials at the sea port of Newhaven also striking, the PCS general secretary, Mark Serwotka, said that members at the bigger port of Dover could be called out next, potentially over six months of action across government departments.

Serwotka added: "I think in January what you will see is a huge escalation of this action in the civil service, and across the rest of our economy, unless the government get around the negotiating table."

Rail firms and motoring organisations suggested the worst of the Christmas getaway may have been mitigated by people opting to travel earlier in the week, with the RAC noting spikes in traffic on Monday.

The AA said roads were extremely busy yesterday nonetheless, with more than half the usual number of daily breakdowns reported to its patrols before midday.

Parts of the M25 were closed due to flooding in the morning, while severe congestion was also reported by the AA on the M1 around Luton in both directions, the M20, M3, M4/M5 near Bristol, the M5 north of Birmingham, M60 west of Manchester and M8 near Glasgow.

Edmund King, the AA president, said research showed just under a third of adults were this year opting to drive on journeys where they would normally have used the train.

King said: "After a slow start the traffic nightmare before Christmas is getting worse. Today [Friday] and tomorrow will be the busiest on the roads with some 17m trips each day."

Ministers face a new year in which a string of public sector unions are pledging long-term strike action, extending well beyond transport.

While the GMB announced yesterday that it was putting off a second ambulance workers' strike planned for 28 December until 11 January, billed as a way to show "gratitude" for public support for the first stoppage, the Royal College of Nursing announced two new strike dates for January.

Some unions have now indicated they could potentially accept an improved pay deal below inflation. However, ministers are sticking rigidly to their position that it is impossible to move beyond deals offered months ago by official pay review bodies.

Quizzed about the transport strikes during a visit to a homeless shelter in London yesterday, Rishi Sunak said he was "really sad" at the disruption, insisting the government had "acted fairly and reasonably in accepting all the recommendations of the public sector pay review bodies".

Asked whether he was willing to risk a drawn-out period of stoppages, the prime minister said increasing pay offers risked exacerbating inflation, calling this "the major economic challenge that we all face".

Even before the main Christmas strike, industrial action by the RMT across train operators in England severelyaffected some services yesterday, with an overtime ban bringing many South Western, Chiltern and East Midlands trains to a premature halt. Dozens of trains operated by TransPennine Express, Northern and Avanti were also cancelled, mainly because of ongoing problems staffing trains.

▲ *Passengers at King's Cross station in London this week. Most rail services will end by 3pm today*
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY RAIN/EPA

Engineering work and strikes by the TSSA union at several train operators will further disrupt the railway until new year, when five days of strikes between the RMT and the drivers' union Aslef will wipe out most services again.

Rail passengers in the south-east of England could face more disruption after the Prospect and TSSA unions announced strikes on the Elizabeth Line on 12 January, followed by an overtime ban until the end of February.

Transport for London said the impact on services was unclear.

A three-day baggage handlers' strike from 29 December, which could have compounded problems for passengers at Heathrow, was called off by Unite after members agreed a 10.5% pay rise with their employer, Menzies.

A Department for Transport spokesperson said: "Far from blocking a deal, the transport secretary and rail minister have facilitated talks and ensured a fair and reasonable offer was put forward.

"After two years of virtual Christmases, the British public deserve better than to have their festive celebrations impacted by strikes."

At Heathrow

‘We braced ourselves for chaos, but it was open’

Rachel Hall

Passengers entered Heathrow yesterday braced for the sight of queues snaking their way around the airport and departure boards coldly telling them their festive season was ruined.

With concerns that travel chaos could run into the new year as 1,000 Border Force staff began the first of eight days of strikes, travellers at Europe’s busiest airport did not have high hopes of flying home for Christmas on time.

But many of their worst fears were dissipated after ministers took the remarkable step of asking uniformed army personnel to stand in for striking workers.

Lucy Jenkins, 35, from north London, had been anxious about the delays after travelling overnight from Antigua with her two small children.

“Any delay is never going to be particularly fun, so we were apprehensive,” she said.

She considered changing her flying dates, but neither wanted to cut short her holiday nor miss Christmas in the UK, as she is hosting her entire family.

She landed to a WhatsApp message from her mother warning of two-hour queues, but was relieved to encounter no such thing. Her family were processed by a Home Office official, but she said 90% of desks were staffed by army personnel in uniform. “We needed to get back for turkey delivery otherwise it would be a pretty sad Christmas day,” she added.

▲ *‘Much better than expected’ – Rob Pascal and daughter Libby*

However, there are five strike days to come after Christmas, with the busiest date for arrivals expected to be 30 December.

Jo Wild, a 57-year-old travel agent from Reading, flew in from Montego Bay in Jamaica with Virgin Airlines and landed on time at 11.15am. “We braced ourselves for long lines and general chaos, however almost all the e-gates were open, there were still regular staff guiding people into the right channels, and we walked straight to an e-gate,” she said.

“There were army personnel seated at the desks so I guess in the event of passport problems they were ready. It was our speediest entry to the UK from six holidays this year.”

Wild said she had waited an hour and a half to get her suitcase back. “The baggage hall is strewn with left luggage. I have never seen anything like it.”

In Terminal 5, a small crowd of people were waiting in front of a glittering Christmas tree to give arriving friends and family a welcome hug.

To mitigate the impact of the strikes, on 16 December two of Heathrow’s main airlines, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, stopped selling tickets for arrivals on strike days and offered ticket-holders free date changes.

A British Airways spokesperson said the carrier was “not experiencing significant delays” to luggage or flights. Virgin Atlantic was approached for comment but did not respond.

Rob Pascal, 40, brought his daughter Libby, 13, from Hanover in Germany to London for her first Christmas with British family in three years, in the wake of the pandemic. The pair arrived at noon and were relieved to find that the trip was “much, much better than expected”.

“It was absolutely fine, probably as quick as I’ve ever got through passport control. We saw army personnel manning the passport control desks,” he said.

A Heathrow spokesperson said that the airport was operating as normal and that there had been minimal queueing. She added that there had been no flight cancellations due to industrial action, despite earlier reports warning that up to 30% of flights could be cancelled.

She said that the morning arrivals peak – when nearly 30,000 passengers passed through the border – had started well, with “virtually zero wait time” in “free flowing” immigration halls, and with Border Force and the military “providing a good service.”

> *‘We needed to be back for turkey delivery, or it would have been a sad Christmas Day’*
>
> **Lucy Jenkins**
> *Returning from Antigua*

▲ *Members of the PCS union near Heathrow taking part in the strike by Border Force workers yesterday. Military personnel were drafted in to the airport to cover for staff taking industrial action* PHOTOGRAPH: PETER NICHOLLS/REUTERS

Travel trouble
How journeys will be affected

The great Christmas getaway continues today as millions of people travel across the UK to be with friends and family for the festive season.

But strikes mean journeys home could be severely hampered by industrial action on the roads, railways and at airports, as Britain’s transport network reaches breaking point. Here is what to expect:

What is the situation on the railways?

Rail passengers have been urged to only travel if “absolutely necessary” as thousands of members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union at Network Rail will walk out from 6pm on Christmas Eve until 6am on 27 December.

The union said the industrial action would mostly affect planned engineering works, but Network Rail has confirmed that trains will stop running at about 3pm on Christmas Eve.

A number of train operators have told passengers to only travel if “absolutely necessary”, as some routes will not operate at all, and others will have a limited service.

An overtime ban – industrial action short of a strike – could further disrupt services when they are in high demand this afternoon. It has already wreaked havoc with timetables on some lines on non-strike days, with about 4,000 trains cancelled daily.

The limited train services will almost certainly have a knock-on effect on the number of cars on the road. A survey by the RAC indicated that nearly half of people affected by rail strikes this month were planning to drive themselves or get a lift from someone else.

Yesterday, the RMT accused the government of “going missing”, with no further talks planned since last week’s meeting between the rail minister, Huw Merriman, and industry leaders.

The chief executive of Network Rail, Andrew Haines, said the union was causing “needless misery to its own members, to the railway and to the country’s economy”.

What about the roads?

The AA predicts that 16.5 million people will travel by road today and have warned of lengthy delays and traffic jams on key motorways and A-roads.

The AA has identified the worst traffic hotspots as the M25; the M5 between Bristol and Weston-super-Mare; the M6 around Birmingham; stretches of the M1 “smart” motorway from Luton northwards; the M62 and M60 in the north-west; the M4; and the M27.

The motoring organisation warned that the rail strikes could “add to the getaway mayhem” by lowering travellers’ confidence in public transport.

The AA’s head of roads policy, Jack Cousens, said: “We are advising those heading out in their cars to be prepared for some congestion, especially on popular routes heading out of London.

“The rail strikes have convinced more people to travel by car this year, and while hundreds of miles of roadworks have been removed to ease the pain, it might not be enough to keep the queues away.”

The transport analytics company Inrix said it expected journey times by road to be around 14% longer compared with the same period last year.

Pressure on the roads ahead on Christmas could be further exacerbated by industrial action by employees of National Highways.

Members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union who work as motorway control room staff and traffic officers will continue their four-day strike today and tomorrow.

The PCS said the action risked “bringing the road network to a standstill”, and road safety campaigners said they were “very concerned” about potential delays in setting warning signs on major roads.

National Highways said no roads would be closed as a result of the industrial action, that it had “well-rehearsed resilience plans in place” and that the strikes involved a small number of frontline staff.

What is happening at airports?

Border Force officials joined the wave of industrial action across the country yesterday and will strike every day for the rest of the year except 27 December.

Travellers had been warned to expect delays amid fears that long queues at passport control could lead to people being held on planes, disrupting subsequent departures.

Around 1,000 members of the PCS union employed by the Home Office to operate passport booths are on strike at Heathrow, Birmingham, Cardiff, Gatwick, Glasgow and Manchester airports, as well as at the port of Newhaven in East Sussex.

The Home Office has drafted in military personnel trained to check passports. Heathrow and Gatwick said their immigration halls were operating as normal yesterday.

Joe Middleton and agencies

Nurses on the picket line outside Alder Hey children's hospital, Liverpool, this week
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER THOMOND/GUARDIAN

Make us an offer and we'll vote on it – even if it is below inflation, says union leader

Kiran Stacey
Denis Campbell
Peter Walker

> *'We still want above inflation, but we will take an offer back to our members'*
>
> **Rachel Harrison**
> *GMB national secretary*

The head of a leading public sector union has urged ministers to make a pay offer to striking workers, insisting it does not necessarily have to beat inflation.

Speaking hours after the GMB announced it would postpone an ambulance workers' strike planned for 28 December until 11 January, the national secretary, Rachel Harrison, told the Guardian a new pay offer would be taken to members even if it was less than inflation.

The development is a sign of a potential route forward amid a growing wave of stoppages as part of what has seemed an increasingly intractable row over pay.

Harrison said: "What we are saying to the government is come to us, make us an offer, GMB members will vote on it. We are not making a specific demand. We would still like to see an inflation-busting offer and the restoration of decades' worth of lost wages, but if an offer is made, we will take that back to our members."

Saying the decision to delay the new ambulance strike had been made to show "gratitude" to the public for their support, Harrison's comments on pay are the most explicit sign yet from any large union leader that they might accept an offer below inflation.

The Royal College of Nurses (RCN) has also said it is willing to give way on its demand for 5% above inflation, while Unison dropped a hint on Thursday it was prepared to compromise. However, the RCN announced two new strike dates in January.

Christina McAnea, Unison's general secretary, urged ministers to offer its 400,000 members who work in the NHS "an increase better matching inflation". Ministers have insisted they will not contemplate pay rises above those recommended by the public sector pay review bodies, saying doing so would fuel double-digit inflation and be unaffordable.

Steve Barclay, the health secretary, reiterated this robust stance yesterday, saying that to agree to any higher pay demand "would mean taking money away from frontline services and cause further delays to care".

Responding to the GMB's decision and the RCN's new strikes, Barclay said: "While union members will not be going ahead with strikes over Christmas, we are disappointed they have announced further coordinated strikes in January to cause maximum disruption at a time when the NHS is already under extreme pressure.

"Strikes are in no one's best interest, least of all patients, and I urge unions to reconsider further industrial action."

Wednesday's ambulance strike has been postponed to next month

The new RCN action will involve nurses refusing to work at 55 NHS trusts on 18 and 19 January - 11 more than the 44 at which they staged their first strikes on 15 and 20 December.

"The government had the opportunity to end this dispute before Christmas but instead they have chosen to push nursing staff out into the cold again in January," said Pat Cullen, the RCN's general secretary and chief executive.

The union's decision means the NHS in England will face three consecutive weeks of strikes next month, after Unison announced on Thursday that members in five of England's 10 regional ambulance services would stage 24-hour stoppages on 11 and 23 January.

The RCN in Scotland, which is engaged in separate pay talks, is also to announce strikes in January after talks with the Scottish government broke up yesterday. Scotland's health secretary, Humza Yousaf, is preparing to impose an existing offer worth an average of 7.5%.

Yesterday Border Force staff and postal workers were the latest to go on strike, with six airports - Heathrow, Gatwick, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Cardiff - all warning incoming travellers to expect queues.

Mark Serwotka, head of the Public and Commercial Services Union, told BBC Radio 4's Today Programme that his union was prepared for six months of rolling industrial action.

"We have a strike fund that means we can sustain this action after Christmas," he said. "The strike mandate lasts right up until May … [when] we would reballot if we have to."

Ambulances Private firms can charge hundreds for journeys

Anna Isaac

> **£35**
> *Potential hourly pay for a private sector paramedic. Unison says NHS paramedics get £13.84 to £20.76*
>
> **£400**
> *Potential cost of booking a private ambulance service for a short trip in some parts of England*

Private ambulance companies have been cashing in on strikes and long response times to 999 calls by charging hundreds of pounds to carry stricken people to hospital.

In another sign of the growing pressures on the NHS and the private sector's encroachment on the health service, the Guardian can reveal that several of these services have expanded in recent months to tap into the growing demand.

One firm, Met Medical, announced in November that it would provide paramedic services in St Albans, Hertfordshire, specifically to replace overwhelmed NHS ambulances. Customers can call for urgent home visits when an NHS ambulance has not been immediately available.

"The UK ambulance service is under extreme pressure and it's taking as long as 24 hours or more for some services to reach patients," it says on its website.

The newly expanded services aim to cover all but the immediate threat to life - the "life and limb cover".

Paramedics can earn between £22 and £35 an hour working for private companies. This is significantly more than they can expect in the NHS, where a paramedic on the lowest band is paid £13.84 an hour, rising to £20.76 for the most experienced staff, according to the trade union Unison.

Individual companies declined to provide specific details of their prices. However, some offered rough estimates. The cost of booking a private ambulance service varies significantly. Shorter trips in densely populated central and eastern England were quoted as costing between £300 and £400, whereas bookings in rural areas or across longer distances can cost more than £1,000.

Dave Hawkins, chief executive and owner of Met Medical and a registered paramedic, said his company, which operates in the east of England, was trying to support an NHS under mounting pressures.

Met Medical acted as a contractor for the NHS for ad-hoc support, he said, as well as trialling its new paramedic service.

"These are very thin margins on 999 calls and other callouts, particularly with higher fuel costs," he said. "It's not like the sudden extreme supply-and-demand situation and billions made overnight with PPE."

The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England declined to comment.

Facebook owner to settle class-action suit over Cambridge Analytica scandal

Alex Hern
UK technology editor

Facebook owner Meta will pay out $725m (£600m) to plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit alleging privacy violations related to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, the company has said in a court filing.

The settlement will end a long-running dispute over the revelations that the political consultancy had accessed the data of tens of millions of Facebook users without their consent, and used it to target political adverts.

"This historic settlement will provide meaningful relief to the class in this complex and novel privacy case," the lawyers leading the case, Derek Loeser and Lesley Weaver, said. In a court filing, they added that the settlement "would be the largest data privacy or data breach class action settlement ever achieved in the United States" – 10% higher again than the next largest, also awarded against Facebook, for signing users up to facial recognition services without consent.

A Meta spokesperson said: "We pursued a settlement as it's in the best interest of our community and shareholders. Over the last three years we revamped our approach to privacy and implemented a comprehensive privacy programme. We look forward to continuing to build services people love and trust with privacy at the forefront."

Meta did not admit to wrongdoing as part of the settlement, which still needs to be approved by a judge.

The settlement ends a long dispute related to Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook allowing Cambridge Analytica access to its users' data

The case revolved around allegations that Facebook had broken state and federal laws by failing to prevent app developers harvesting user data on a widespread basis. Users were misled into believing that the company offered them control over their personal data, the lawsuit argued, when in fact "Facebook, despite its promises to restrict access, continued to allow a preferred list of app developers to access the information of users' friends".

Facebook's defence revolved around the claim that users couldn't expect absolute privacy for information they had already posted on the site with the knowledge that it would be shown to their friends. As a result, the company argued, the users had suffered no "tangible" harm.

$725m
Amount (about £600m) Meta will pay out to Facebook users whose data was used without consent

That was rejected in 2019 by Judge Vince Chhabria, who said that "Facebook's motion to dismiss is littered with assumptions about the degree to which social media users can reasonably expect their personal information and communications to remain private. Facebook's view is so wrong.

"Sharing information with your social media friends does not categorically eliminate your privacy interest in that information," Chhabria added.

At the core of the case are the revelations around Cambridge Analytica, which harvested the data of tens of millions of Facebook users by partnering with a personality quiz operation and using the Facebook API to build extensive profiles on individual's behaviour and personalities. Facebook discovered the operation in 2015, but it was only revealed to the public in March 2018, when an Observer investigation uncovered the operation's involvement in the US election.

Rare Peruzzi painting of the nativity saved for the UK as a 'Christmas gift'

Harriet Sherwood
Arts and culture correspondent

A rare painting of the nativity created more than 500 years ago by Baldassare Peruzzi has been saved by the government as a "Christmas gift for the nation" after an export ban was imposed.

The Nativity, the only work by Peruzzi in the UK, will go on display in Northern Ireland next year. It was acquired by National Museums NI after funds were raised to buy the work from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund, Northern Ireland's Department for Communities and the Esmé Mitchell Trust.

The painting, valued at £277,990, had an export bar placed on it last year by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Cultural items considered too important to leave the UK may have one imposed. The DCMS said at the time: "An extraordinarily rare painting depicting the nativity is at risk of leaving the country unless a UK buyer can be found to save the work for the nation."

The Nativity was painted around 1515 by Peruzzi, one of the leading figures in art in Rome in the first decades of the 16th century who worked alongside Raphael and Donato Bramante. He was an architect, theatre designer, painter and draughtsman.

'[Its acquisition] is a fantastic Christmas gift for art lovers, and Northern Ireland'

Simon Thurley
NHMF

Most of Peruzzi's paintings were in fresco and have been lost to history. The Nativity is one of only a handful of works outside Italy.

The painting is undergoing conservation work at the National Gallery in London before moving to its permanent home at the Ulster Museum in Belfast in 2023.

Peruzzi depicted his nativity scene at night. Its "nocturnal setting is most striking … Peruzzi's use of dark tonalities for a work on this intimate scale was unusual, daring even," the Arts Council said.

The Nativity by Peruzzi, a leading figure in the arts in 16th century Rome, which is undergoing conservation at the National Gallery, above PHOTOGRAPH: THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Stephen Parkinson, the arts and heritage minister, said: "For many, being part of a nativity play is one of the first ways that we learn the story of Christmas. That is why I am delighted that, this Christmas Eve, we can announce that this incredible painting of that famous event has been saved for the nation thanks to the export bar system."

Simon Thurley, chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), said the painting was "an incredibly important artwork" and its acquisition was "a fantastic Christmas present for art lovers, and for Northern Ireland in particular".

Jenny Waldman, the director of the Art Fund, said: "This is an extraordinary, and beautiful, work of art. We are delighted that … a painting by Peruzzi will now enter a public UK collection for the first time."

The National Heritage Memorial Fund contributed £99,990 to the cost of the artwork. The Art Fund gave £100,000, the Department for Communities NI contributed £70,000, and the Esmé Mitchell Trust gave £8,000.

King Charles picks chapel at Windsor for his first festive message

Caroline Davies

King Charles has chosen to broadcast his first Christmas message from inside St George's chapel at Windsor Castle, where the committal service of his late mother, Queen Elizabeth, was held three months ago.

In a photograph, released before the broadcast on Christmas Day, Charles is seen standing in the quire for his inaugural festive address to the country and the rest of the Commonwealth.

No details of his message have been released, but he is expected to pay personal tribute to his mother, who was laid to rest in the King George VI memorial chapel within St George's next to the Duke of Edinburgh.

It was recorded on 13 December, two days before the final three episodes of the controversial Netflix Harry & Meghan docuseries in which the Sussexes attacked the royal family and the institution of monarchy.

It seems unlikely the king will refer to the personal family woes that have dogged his reign so far. His mother used her Christmas broadcasts to address universal themes, her faith, and the country's highs – and lows – of the previous year.

One message he does impart, however, is his passion for matters environmental, with the tree featured in the broadcast decorated with ornaments made from sustainable materials including paper and glass, as well as natural pine cones. During the broadcast the choir of St George's chapel performs the national anthem and sings a carol.

Family members will gather at Sandringham, as they did during the late Queen's reign, and attend Christmas Day service at St Mary Magdalene church. The royal standard was seen flying at the estate on Thursday, indicating Charles had arrived. He and the queen consort are expected to be joined by the Prince and Princess of Wales and their three children, and the Earl and Countess of Wessex and their two children.

In a break with tradition, Charles and Camilla will reportedly head to Scotland, and their Birkhall home on the Balmoral estate, after the Christmas period. The Queen usually remained at Sandringham until after 6 February, her accession day.

King Charles's Christmas speech was recorded on 13 December

TV review This sitcom's gift for inappropriate humour runs amok

Motherland Christmas special
BBC One
★★★★☆

Jack Seale

Sometimes after a hard day's – or year's parenting, it's difficult to know if a parenting sitcom is really what you want to watch. From Outnumbered to Breeders and, back for a Christmas special, Motherland, they do tend towards bleakness. Are you worried that you won't ever find a reward in the endless cycle of rushed breakfasts, lost consent forms, botched childcare arrangements, pointless parents' evenings, compromised marriages and unhelpful grandparents? Sometimes Motherland feels like it's saying: you never will, so let's mirthlessly chuckle at how thankless the task is – and always will be.

In the new episode, once the Christmas preamble is out of the way, we settle in for what looks like a typically horrendous 25 December with Julia (Anna Maxwell Martin). As well as continuing her fractious relationship with her own mother (Ellie Haddington), whose gift she shops for online on the day itself, she must deal with the inane wanderings of her ludicrously self-absorbed husband (Oliver Chris), who is constructing a plunge pool in the garden, and his parents, who are farting in the lounge.

Friends are either incoming or suffering their own agonies. Kevin (Paul Ready), the male one, is invited because he can cook. Liz (Diane Morgan), the working-class one, is meant to be going to her feckless ex's but, well, he's feckless, so she'll arrive at Julia's soon enough. Enviably sorted Meg (Tanya Moodie) – whose cancer treatment storyline last year was a rare example of a proper problem intruding into their million-pound Victorian terraces – is chugging Baileys and reconsidering her life choices, because she's been hit with the indecency of her husband buying her an expensive present she dislikes.

What of brittle queen bee Amanda (Lucy Punch)? A character that has improved steadily as her world has fractured must now face Christmas with her ex-husband, his new partner and Amanda's cartoonishly horrible mother, Felicity (Joanna Lumley). The sort of mum who asks you to get ready to go out when she knows full well you are already wearing a pricey new outfit and full face of makeup. Felicity is the best and worst of Motherland. Often she spits out jaw-dropping lines that boldly push the show's trademark micro-aggressions into darker territory, but her belittling of her daughter is both generic and so relentless it becomes more depressing than amusingly recognisable.

▼ *Motherland's cast in the festive special, featuring an event that flips Christmas tribulations on their head*
PHOTOGRAPH: NATALIE SEERY/BBC/MERMAN

Back at Julia's house, Christmas is threatening to become another infuriating grind for a woman who embodies how lonely it is when you're left to do everything for everyone in your house without any acknowledgment, let alone any gratitude. And yet Kevin is there, his nervous energy somehow producing a delicious festive dinner. Liz is incoming with crisps and wine. Meg is in view, since she's had enough of her lot. It will be OK, ish: beneath all the muttered curses and rolled eyes, Motherland is a paean to the power of a gang of supportive mums (and Kevin) giving one another a lifeline.

And then … this Christmas episode features a special event, which flips the regular Christmas Day tribulations on their head and lets Motherland's gifts for gleefully inappropriate black humour, biting pathos and unexpected physical comedy run amok: when it's on form it's a show that makes you gasp in shock as you laugh. There's plenty of that here, not to mention crying as you laugh and defiantly punching the air as you laugh, when a payoff that has long been coming finally arrives.

Motherland might flirt with blank despair and be very funny doing it, but it always ends up as more catharsis than complaint. So let's join it in raising a glass, to a trying Christmas and a doubtless exhausting new year. Cheers!

Representative Example	Duration of Agreement	Upfront Cost	Monthly Device Payment	Credit Amount	Total Amount Payable	Interest Rate	Representative APR	Device Cash Price	Airtime Plan today to March 2023	Airtime Plan April 2023 – March 2024	Airtime Plan April 2024 – March 2025
iPad Pro 12.9-inch	48 Months	£20	£29.25	£1403.76	£1423.76	0%	0%	£1423.76	£13	£13 + RPI announced in Feb 2023 = Price A	£13 + RPI announced in Feb 2023 = Price A

***Each year your Airtime Plan will be increased by the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate of inflation announced in February plus 3.9%. If RPI is negative, we'll only apply the 3.9%. You'll see this increase on your April 2022 bill onwards. See o2.co.uk/prices.** £29.25 Device Plan for 48 months and £13 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. Get 6 months airtime at £0 cost when you buy the iPad Pro 12.9-inch 6th Generation with a 48 month device plan. £29.25 for the first 6 months and £42.25* thereafter on a 1GB tariff. Data allowances must be used within the months and cannot be carried over. Subject to availability. Ends 28 December 2022. 48 Months. **O2 Refresh custom plans:** Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 48. Like new devices available for 3 to 36 months. The device cost will be the same whatever you choose. There may be an upfront cost. You need a monthly rolling Airtime Plan as long as you have a Device Plan. Pay off your Device Plan at any time and you can choose to keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade or leave. If your Airtime Plan ends for any reason you will need to pay your Device Plan in full. If you are in the first 24 months of your Device Plan and you cancel your Airtime Plan you will have to pay the remainder of your Device Plan in full. After 24 months you can keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or end it without affecting your Device Plan. Devices subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefónica UK Ltd, SL1 4DX. Telefónica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms. Get up to 6 months Apple TV+ when you buy an eligible IOS device on a Plus Plan from O2 ("Qualifying Purchase"). Redeem directly with Apple via redemption code provided to you within 7 days of Qualifying Purchase. All participants must redeem by 9th November 2023. Redemption terms apply. O2 provides a 3-month subscription (a "Subscription Period"), depending on which available device or offer is chosen, added to any existing or new trial period of up to 3 months provided by Apple directly. You must set up Apple account and agree to Apple's terms of use. You'll be automatically enrolled on to a paid monthly subscription directly with Apple at the end of the relevant Subscription Period. You cannot benefit from more than one subscription period with O2. Tariff eligibility criteria applies which includes being a UK resident and 18+. No cash or alternatives. Lost redemption codes will not be replaced. Offer may be withdrawn or amended at any time. Internet access required. For how to claim and full terms: o2.co.uk/termsandconditions/rewards. Get up to 6 months Apple Music when you buy an eligible tariff direct from O2 ("Qualifying Purchase"). Redeem directly with Apple via redemption code provided to you within 7 days of Qualifying Purchase. All participants must redeem by 23rd June 2023. Redemption terms apply. O2 provides a 5-month subscription ("Subscription Period") added to any existing or new trial period of up to 1 month provided by Apple directly. You must set up Apple account and agree to Apple's terms of use. You'll be automatically enrolled on to a paid monthly subscription directly with Apple at the end of the Subscription Period. You cannot benefit from more than one subscription period with O2. Tariff eligibility criteria applies which includes being a UK resident and 18+. No cash or alternatives. Lost redemption codes will not be replaced. Offer may be withdrawn or amended at any time. Internet access required. For how to claim and full terms: o2.co.uk/termsandconditions/rewards

▼ *George Cohen, second from right, with the victorious England team as Bobby Moore holds the trophy in 1966* PHOTOGRAPH: MIRRORPIX

George Cohen, World Cup winner with England in 1966, dies at 83

Tony Paley

George Cohen, one of the last three surviving members of England's 1966 World Cup winning team, has died at the age of 83.

Cohen spent his entire playing career with Fulham, making 459 appearances, and was described by George Best as "the best full-back I ever played against".

Geoff Hurst, who scored a hat-trick in that famous 1966 victory, led the tributes, tweeting: "Very sad to hear my friend and England teammate George Cohen has died. Everyone, without exception, always said that George was such a lovely man. He will be sadly missed, my heartfelt thoughts are with George's wife Daphne and his family."

Hurst and Bobby Charlton are now the only players left from that World Cup team. George Eastham, Terry Paine and Ian Callaghan are the other surviving members of the England squad from that 1966 campaign.

The right-back and vice-captain in Alf Ramsey's 1966 team, Cohen won the last of his 37 caps just over a year later. He played in two FA Cup semi-finals and worked for Fulham as a matchday host long after his retirement.

Cohen was famously prevented by Ramsey from swapping shirts with an Argentina player following the ill-tempered quarter-final, after which the manager labelled his opponents "animals". He later revealed he had the photograph capturing that moment on a wall at home. The player eventually sold his winner's medal, bought by Fulham for £80,000, in 1998 for financial reasons, becoming the first player in the team to do so.

Cohen was diagnosed with bowel cancer in 1976 and struggled with the illness for 14 years. He became a campaigner and fundraiser for research into the disease, which killed his 1966 teammate and captain, Bobby Moore, and into dementia, which affected a number of the England team in their later years. Cohen said in 2017 that he would be donating his brain for scientific research upon his death.

His nephew Ben Cohen played rugby union for England and also won a World Cup, in 2003.

Fulham also paid tribute to their club great, writing on the club's official Twitter account: "Everyone at Fulham Football Club is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of one of our greatest ever players - and gentlemen - George Cohen MBE."

His contribution to the club was recognised in 2016 when his statue was unveiled at Craven Cottage.

Cohen said at the time: "I find it absolutely wonderful that they even thought I was worthy of [a statue]. Especially as it was alongside Johnny Haynes, the greatest name in Fulham's history. To be alongside him, it was rather unbelievable. It was great to think that not only the club but the supporters had wanted to put a statue of me there."

The Football Association chair, Debbie Hewitt, said: "We are very sad to hear the news of George Cohen's death today. George won 37 caps for England and was vice-captain of our World Cup winning team. We would like to pass on our deep condolences to George's family and friends at this sad time."

Gary Lineker, England's leading World Cup finals goalscorer with 10 at the 1986 and 1990 tournaments, paid tribute to Cohen. "Sorry to hear that George Cohen has died. Another of the heroes of the '66 World Cup winning team leaves us," the BBC football presenter wrote on Twitter. "He'll always have footballing immortality. RIP George."

A tribute posted on the official England Twitter account was titled: "Rest in peace George."

LadBaby team up with Martin Lewis for fifth Christmas No 1

Laura Snapes

LadBaby have broken the chart record they shared with the Beatles to score their fifth consecutive No 1 Christmas single.

The YouTubers Mark and Roxanne Hoyle covered the Band Aid classic Do They Know It's Christmas? in collaboration with MoneySavingExpert's Martin Lewis, rewriting the lyrics around their traditional theme of sausage rolls - with the blessing of original songwriters Midge Ure and Bob Geldof - and retitling it Food Aid.

▲ *From left, Roxanne and Mark Hoyle sing with Martin Lewis*

As with all of LadBaby's Christmas singles, the proceeds from the song benefit the Trussell Trust, which operates a network of food banks.

"We never intended to release a fifth Christmas single but as ambassadors of the Trussell Trust we were not prepared to sit back and do nothing in a year when people are struggling more than ever," the Hoyles said when they announced the single.

Food Aid follows LadBaby's singles Sausage Rolls for Everyone, featuring Ed Sheeran and Elton John, Don't Stop Me Eatin', I Love Sausage Rolls and We Built This City.

The Official Charts Company said that LadBaby faced stiff competition for the top spot from their fellow YouTube stars the Sidemen - KSI, Vik and Tobi - on Christmas Drillings, which features the rapper JME and charted at No 3. Their song raised money for the charity network FareShare, which tackles food poverty and food waste.

The Essex punk band the Kunts made their third attempt at bagging the Christmas No 1 with their song Fuck the Tories, which charted at No 7. Wham!'s perennial Last Christmas came in at No 2.

Woman from Isles of Scilly gives birth on helicopter ride to hospital

Steven Morris

A woman has said she could not have felt safer as she gave birth to her baby boy, even though it happened on a rescue helicopter whizzing her from the Isles of Scilly to Cornwall.

Jennie Trevithick was being flown from the island of St Mary's to have her baby at the Royal Cornwall hospital in Truro, but her labour progressed so quickly that baby Ebbyn arrived before the coastguard helicopter could land.

Trevithick, 41, who runs a brewery on Scilly, had gone to St Mary's hospital with her partner, Hayden Simpson, 38, when she began having contractions. A midwife was worried there could be complications with the birth and suggested she be flown to Truro - about 50 miles away.

Trevithick had been flown to the mainland when she had her first child but her contractions had stopped when the helicopter arrived and she made it to hospital. This time, they carried on and Ebbyn was born before the helicopter could touch down.

After landing, Simpson, an artist and an air traffic controller at St Mary's airport, cut the cord and the family were transferred to the Royal Cornwall hospital. Mother and child are doing well.

Trevithick told the BBC: "Everyone said it must have been so scary being in a helicopter but actually I felt super safe - I was in the best place possible. I couldn't have wished for anything more."

She said that when she had her first child, the arrival of the helicopter had seemed to slow the birth. "With this one, I could hear the helicopter getting closer but there was no sign of anything slowing down. I knew we hadn't landed yet and I reached down to feel the head and I was like, OK," said Trevithick.

It took five hours from the contractions starting to the baby being born just after 2am on 5 December. "It was a surreal experience," she said. "I was holding the baby as we were landing and looked up and went: 'Where are we? What is happening?'."

She praised the helicopter crew and the midwife who travelled with her. "I would love to say thank you to all of them," she said. "They were all amazingly supportive."

▲ *Jennie Trevithick and her partner, Hayden Simpson, with baby Ebbyn*

JOHN LEWIS
for all life's moments

Don't forget the basics, experts say: catch coughs or sneezes in tissues and wash your hands
PHOTOGRAPH: LJUBAPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

Don't put others at risk if you have flu or cold symptoms, health experts say

Nicola Davis
Science correspondent

While the draw of festive parties and family gatherings may be strong, experts have reiterated calls for people who feel unwell with flu-like symptoms to stay home instead.

Hospital admissions for flu are continuing to rise, according to data for England from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), with the highest levels seen in those who are 85 years and over and in children under the age of five.

The overall weekly hospital admission rate for influenza increased to 8.27 per 100,000 in the week beginning 12 December, from 6.80 per 100,000 in the previous week, with the highest hospitalisation rate observed in the north-east.

"Emergency department attendances for influenza-like illness continue to increase nationally, for all age groups and regions," the latest UKHSA report notes.

> *'If you have got symptoms - runny nose, sore throat, fever, headache - please stay at home'*
>
> **Prof Calum Semple**
> *Child health specialist*

Dr Mary Ramsay, the director of public health programmes at the UKHSA, called on people to avoid mixing if unwell. She said: "Both Covid and flu can cause severe illness or even death for those most vulnerable in our communities, and so it is also important to avoid contact with other people if you are unwell in order to help stop infections spreading over the Christmas and new year period."

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme yesterday, Calum Semple, professor of child health and outbreak medicine at the University of Liverpool, said a lot of hospitals, including his own, were under pressure.

"I'm looking at the figures, particularly for the north-west where I work," he said, "and we are seeing flu hard and very early."

Semple said the UKHSA's advice was correct. "If you have got symptoms - runny nose, sore throat, fever, headache and you feel flu-like - then please do stay at home," he said.

"You don't know if the person sitting next to you or in the shop might have an underlying cancer or other other susceptibility."

Semple added that other precautions worth considering include wearing face masks in crowded places where the ventilation is poor.

"But the basics are really important too," he said. "Catch coughs and sneezes in disposable tissues and wash your hands when you come home. Don't be touching things in public and then eating, because again that gets your hands on to your face."

Semple also dismissed discussions about "immunity debt" which advance the theory that Covid lockdowns have resulted in people having weaker immune systems.

"Simply the fact that you haven't been exposed to flu for two years, means that if it's circulating, then you will catch it later," he said.

"It's not because you've somehow weakened your immune system. If you caught it two years ago, you were going to have a severe flu two years ago as well."

Semple added that vaccination is crucial to prevent diseases such as flu, but said an erosion of confidence in vaccination may be behind lower uptake in more deprived areas, including in children and pregnant women.

"I think it's understandable if you accept that there's a degree of fatigue among the population in general and there's been a huge amount of misinformation which really needs to be tackled head on," he said. "And I think that's something where there's room for improvement."

Illness check What we know about this year's infections

Nicola Davis
Science correspondent

While this year's festive season may be less gloomy than the past two, experts are warning that many infectious diseases are circulating. We take a look at the latest statistics and advice.

I thought this Christmas would be 'normal'. What's happening?
The past two Christmases were certainly anything but normal. In 2020, Covid restrictions scuppered many family gatherings while concerns in 2021 over the Omicron variant led to the introduction of a mass booster vaccination campaign, together with advice for people to take precautions including lateral flow tests before meeting others.

As Covid vaccinations have held up well against severe disease, it has begun to look a lot more like a standard Christmas in 2022.

But with Covid infection levels on the rise once more, flu hitting hard and early, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) causing sickness, particularly in young children, experts are urging people to reduce their chance of spreading disease to others.

How bad is the current situation?
According to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics, about 1,197,200 people, or one in 45, in the community in England had Covid in the week ending 9 December - that is a rise of just over 9% from 1,095,100 the week before. Levels have also risen in Scotland, although the trend is not yet clear in Wales and Northern Ireland.

The figures chime with hospital data: According to the UKHSA, overall hospital admission rates for Covid in England hit 9.56 per 100,000 in the week beginning 12 December, up from 6.61 per 100,000 the week before, while data from NHS England reveals that the number of patients primarily being treated for Covid in acute trusts rose from 2,111 on 13 December to 2,741 on 20 December.

Multiple metrics, such as the number of consultations for flu-like illnesses at GP surgeries in England, suggest cases of flu are also rising, with hospital and intensive care admission rates for flu increasing.

Meanwhile, RSV continues to circulate: while admissions in children under five years have dropped, data suggests they remain high, at 17.48 per 100,000 for the week beginning 12 December.

> **1.2m**
> *People in England who had Covid in the first week of December, a rise of about 9% from the week before*

Are we being asked to cancel Christmas?
No. There are no restrictions this year. But experts are warning people to be careful about spreading infections - Covid, flu and RSV can cause serious illness, particularly in vulnerable people.

What's the advice?
First, to take up the offer of Covid and flu vaccinations. But experts also reiterated the importance of basic infection control measures, such as hand-washing, ventilation and wearing a face covering in crowded settings. Those who feel unwell should stay home and not mix with others, they added.

◀ *Rishi Sunak serves breakfast during a visit to a homeless shelter in London yesterday*
PHOTOGRAPH: SIMON DAWSON/NO 10 DOWNING STREET

Sunak confirms Westminster could try to block gender recognition law

Peter Walker
Kiran Stacey
Libby Brooks

Rishi Sunak has waded into the row over Scotland's gender recognition bill, insisting it was "completely reasonable" to assess its potential impact on women.

The prime minister confirmed yesterday that the UK government is considering blocking the new law, which makes it easier for trans people to legally change their gender.

Westminster officials now have 28 days to decide whether to deploy the "nuclear option" of prohibiting the bill from going for royal assent, after Scotland on Thursday became the first part of the UK to introduce a self-identification system.

The UK's Scottish secretary, Alister Jack, said he could invoke section 35 of the Scotland Act, which in effect gives him a veto on laws he believes have an impact on constitutionally reserved matters – a decision that could set the stage for a bitter constitutional clash. While gender recognition is devolved to Holyrood, equalities legislation – which the new law will interact with – is reserved to Westminster.

Sunak, speaking during a visit to a homeless shelter in London yesterday, said: "Lots of people have got concerns about this new bill in Scotland, about the impact it will have on women's and children's safety.

"So I think it is completely reasonable for the UK government to have a look at it, understand what the consequences are for women and children's safety in the rest of the UK, and then decide on what the appropriate course of action is."

> *'Lots of people have concerns about this new bill in Scotland'*
> **Rishi Sunak**
> *Prime minister*

In a statement overnight the UK equalities minister, Kemi Badenoch, reiterated her worries over what she said had been a bill passed despite significant opposition among sections of the SNP and some equalities groups. Badenoch said she shared their concerns "on this bill's impact on the functioning of the Equality Act, which is designed to protect all UK citizens".

Any move to block the bill by arguing that it conflicts with the Equality Act seems likely to end in a court battle, with Shona Robison, Scotland's social justice secretary, saying the Scottish government would push back hard against this.

"The bill as passed is absolutely within legislative competence and, of course, was backed by an overwhelming majority with support from all parties," she told BBC Radio Scotland. "I think any attempt by the UK government to undermine what is, after all, the democratic will of the Scottish parliament will be vigorously contested by the Scottish government."

Holyrood is understood to be waiting for the dust to settle after threats of intervention in the run-up to the bill. It believes ministers in Westminster would need to be highly confident of their legal position to activate section 35, which has never been used in the history of the Scottish parliament.

Helena Kennedy, a Scottish KC and Labour peer, told the BBC's Today programme she believed it would be "absolute folly" to block the bill. "The idea that the Scottish parliament should be overridden by Westminster because the Conservative party don't like this would really be very disruptive to the unity of the United Kingdom," she said.

After the recent supreme court ruling that the Scottish parliament does not have the power to legally conduct a second independence referendum, the first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has repeatedly described Sunak's government as "democracy deniers", a narrative likely to be strengthened by a Westminster challenge to Holyrood lawmaking.

While any court fight would centre on the constitutional issues, the wider argument is infused with culture war differences, where trans rights have become a key battleground.

Badenoch is an enthusiastic participant in the culture war. Sunak has generally stayed clear, although in the summer Conservative party leadership contest he regularly pledged to protect "our women" from supposedly "woke" values.

The Scottish government hailed what it called "a historic day for equality" after the vote, in which MSPs voted 86-39 in favour of plans to make it easier and less intrusive for people to legally change their gender.

Reactions Campaigners hail 'amazing day for queer rights'

Libby Brooks
Scotland correspondent

After the celebratory whoops and hugs, an initial euphoria has given way to reflection as trans and nonbinary Scots consider what the passing of the gender recognition reform (Scotland) bill means for them.

The Holyrood parliament voted overwhelmingly on Thursday for Scotland to become the first part of the UK to introduce a system of self-identification to change one's legal gender, sweeping away requirements for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria and extending applications to 16- and 17-year-olds.

However, the final vote took place after months of increasingly hostile and angry public debate around whether these changes would adversely affect women's rights and spaces.

Campaigners say too often transgender voices felt they were absent from those discussions. As Vic Valentine, the manager of Scottish Trans, said when they welcomed the news: "Trans people across Scotland will be feeling pleased and relieved that this bill has passed, after many years of difficult public debate that has often felt like people are talking about us, and not to us."

Beth, a queer activist, was watching the proceedings from the public gallery in Holyrood and describes it as "an amazing day for the queer rights movement in Scotland". Nevertheless, she also suggests that the toxicity around the reforms "has allowed intolerance to grow".

"Hate crime figures are rising at a worrying rate. However, I hope that when the bill becomes law, people will see just like every other country before us that the misinformation behind gender recognition reform is simply that."

"It was definitely a significant moment," says Dylan Hamilton, a climate activist, "and it was important to show that the majority voted for these reforms, because sometimes with this debate it can feel like the entire world is against you." Like many trans Scots, he also notes the extensive delays in the bill's progress: it was first promised six years ago, went through two of the largest consultation held by Holyrood and was paused for the pandemic.

▲ *Campaigners outside Holyrood show support for the bill this week*

"Gender recognition has become a frontline issue because of this bill, but it's not the most important thing for most trans people," Hamilton adds. "It's just an administrative issue to make life more dignified, but much more important are the horrifically long waiting lists, hate crime and the coming conversion therapy bill [Scotland will include transgender people in its ban on the practice, while the UK government U-turned to exclude them this year]."

For non-binary people, the bill's progress was a disappointment as it did not include them as originally proposed.

Andie, a marine biologist, says: "Non-binary people are still trying to get our own recognition but this is a good step."

Hotel Chocolat

Vegans and robots help towards goal of 1bn treats a year

◀ *Chocolate on tap at the Hotel Chocolat factory in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire*

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANTONIO OLMOS/THE GUARDIAN

Sarah Butler

Shiny tanks of molten chocolate stand guard over a factory floor where three production lines squirt, chill and fill festive treats into existence. Production of Hotel Chocolat's Christmas selection starts in June at its factory in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, and finishes several weeks before Christmas, when it switches to making Valentine's Day and Easter delicacies.

Christmas is by far the busiest time of year for Hotel Chocolat's shops, where sales easily outstrip Easter, the traditional time for a chocolate binge.

This year, robots have been shouldering a bigger share of the work in making peanut butter and jelly confectionery and batons of dark chocolate as the company copes with rising costs that led it to report an annual loss this year, after a bumper time after the start of the pandemic, when sales jumped by two-thirds over two years.

On one production line, workers in hairnets and white coats sprinkle florentine and biscuit pieces into moulds for chocolate Christmas wreaths. The process needs only six people, down from 36 previously, as new robots lift the chocolates from their moulds using suction.

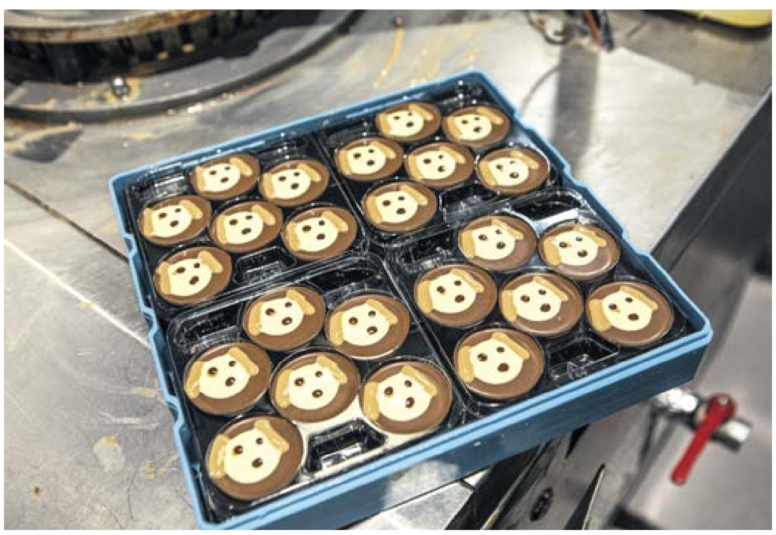
An additional gadget will place chocolates into their presentation box, a process currently done by hand, to save more time and labour costs. It means employees' efforts can be concentrated on giving a hand finish to chocolate treats.

Angus Thirlwell, a co-founder and the chief executive of Hotel Chocolat, said: "We now have the scale and stability in the ranges so that we can use automation to become a smarter manufacturer."

Doing so would help the brand resist passing on the full pressure of price increases on raw ingredients, energy, labour and transport.

"We have moved from a manufacturing environment where the challenge was: 'Can we make enough?' to now, over the next one to two years, focusing on: 'How do we make [things] faster and mitigate costs and refine and optimise?'"

He said a machine that puts the card cushion on top of a finished box of chocolates, for example, had paid for itself in only six months.



▲ *Chocolate macarons being packed on the Hotel Chocolat production line. The factory employs 250 people night and day, five days a week, with automation helping to mitigate the increase in the cost of ingredients*

◀ *A worker mixes chocolate into a vat that will make the chocolate for Dapper Dogs, above*

Hotel Chocolat's factory employs about 250 people across three shifts 24 hours a day, five days a week, with only a handful of extra agency staff now required at peak times, thanks to automation.

Additional technology - and a potential extension to the factory complex - could also help extend production up to 1bn chocolates a year from up to 300m at present.

Ollie Hughes, who oversees the manufacturing plant, said experienced people would continue to be an important part of the mix, as well as machines, because they are able to quickly adapt to create experimental new products or seasonal twists on standard ones.

One idea that has been rapidly gaining traction is vegan milk chocolate, where humans still have an important role to play.

On the fourth floor, partitioned from the rest of the factory so that you have to change your foot coverings, cap and white coat before entering, is a Willy Wonkaish tangle of gleaming silver pipes and tanks where Hotel Chocolat creates the dairy-free alternative for its chocolates and hot chocolate flakes. The area is separated to ensure no contamination from milk products.

Made with cocoa butter, hazelnut flour, caster sugar, soya lecithin and Belcolade cocoa, tumbled together for several hours to create a liquid - several ingredients are gradually added by hand. Hotel Chocolat's nut milk chocolate can then be piped directly to where it is required around the factory.

The recipe took five years to develop so that it was sufficiently "creamy" to meet demand for a premium vegan alternative to milk chocolate.

It comes as demand for vegan chocolate has soared, with some dairy enthusiasts keen to cut down on their intake of milk-based products for environmental reasons. Hotel Chocolat has produced six different types of vegan milk chocolate this year compared with only two last year.

Despite a tough year, the company has achieved growth of considerably more than 10% in its "unbelievably vegan" chocolate range this year.

"You can see from data that customers are coming back and rebuying once they have got a taste for it," Thirlwell said.

Automation has been important in meeting demand for Hotel Chocolat's hot chocolate drink sachets - created for its Velvetiser drinks maker - another rapid growth area.

Production of the sachets started in 2019 with an adapted herb grater processing solid chocolate to create 5m sachets of chocolate flakes a year. That process was gradually improved to get to 15m.

Now a new system creates flakes from piped strips of chocolate that are then chilled and broken into flakes by rollers able to create 55m sachets a year at present and, eventually, up to 180m.

A many-pronged automated rotating packing machine then ensures each sachet has the right amount of flakes and is sealed up before sending on each packet to be automatically slipped into the cartons of 10 they are sold in.

The newest stage of automation is a machine that builds a packing box for six cartons and delivers the box on to a pallet - meaning that 16 fewer people are required in the packing process.

"The stereotype of our type of manufacturer is legions of low-paid people doing menial work," Thirlwell said, adding that technology allowed it to concentrate on better-paid full-time roles with people who could quickly adapt to help test new ideas rather than spending time making up boxes.

"We have got the opportunity as a British manufacturer to step up to the next level," he said.

Serving suggestion shown. Selected stores only – subject to availability. Prices may vary in selected stores. Prices correct at time of publication.
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▼ *Blether Tea at the Auchinleck community centre, bringing people together post-lockdown*
PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD/THE GUARDIAN

Community help Tea, a chat – and real support in a crisis

Libby Brooks
Scotland correspondent

At the Blether Tea on Wednesday morning, a group of old people in the East Ayrshire village of Auchinleck sit around a table crammed with mugs and plates of cake in the community centre library. "It's not hard to get a conversation going," says 79-year-old Catherine Burley, with some understatement. "The time flies."

Surrounded by piles of selection boxes being parcelled up for local children's Christmas stockings, the women reminisce over practising the Charleston for the weekly village dance "till there was no pattern left on the carpet", watching buses ferrying mine workers for their shift in the days when "most of us had someone working in the pit", and the minister who played the accordion every Sunday.

Since Covid, many of their contemporaries have got "a bit thingmy" about going out, explains Jean Gibson, 81. "It feels like some folk disappeared."

The Blether Tea sessions are a reason to reconnect, share memories and make new ones - there was the recent pantomime trip and plans for a new year museum outing: "They'll maybe keep us there," deadpans Gibson.

◀ *Betty Davidson, at a Blether Tea where 'it's not hard to get a conversation going'*

Connection is at the heart of everything that Auchinleck Community Development Initiative (ACDI) does. Based at this spruce community centre for a decade, run by paid staff and dedicated volunteers, it is "not just a 9-5 service" said its energetic development manager, Stephen McCarron.

As well as support groups for older people, parents and children, it offers help with training, housing, finances and addiction, and a social enterprise garden centre at the back of the building, which has provided jobs for more than 300 people over the past 10 years.

Donations to this year's Guardian and Observer charity appeal will go - via our two partners, Locality and Citizens Advice - to scores of local charities and community projects such as ACDI, which are working at the frontline of the cost of living crisis in some of Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods.

Across the hallway, the weekly Tiny Tots session is finishing up, launched last autumn to encourage parents with young children back out into the community after Covid's lengthy restrictions.

Susan Kennedy was new to the area: this was the first group she had come to with 15-month-old Ty and five-month-old Daisy, and now she has met other mums who live on her estate. "He used to be quite strange [shy] with people but since we've come here he's got to socialise more."

Youth worker Rachel Alexander said: "The children who come to the centre are very aware of the cost of living, even the younger ones, worrying if mum and dad can buy them Christmas presents." They used a "worry box" with the children and offered support to their parents discreetly.

The capacity to connect came with proximity, said Stewart. "It's not someone sitting in Edinburgh with their nose in a spreadsheet. We're led by people who suffer similar issues to those we help."

If that community connection was starved during lockdown, it was trampled long before. Aggressive de-industrialisation affected coalmining and textiles, the main employers of men and women of the area, creating structural unemployment and hereditary problems of antisocial behaviour and alcohol misuse, McCarron explained. Social connections such as the miners' welfare clubs disintegrated and were replaced with apathy, amplified by rural isolation. "These are the forgotten communities."

The distillation of ACDI's ethos is its community welfare champion, a post first developed in 2019 in response to rural bank closures but now expanding its remit to buffer locals through the winter cost of living squeeze. In the past year, the champion has helped about 125 people to raise £165,000 by accessing or streamlining benefits.

The need was already there, said Stewart, with high digital exclusion among older people and low-income families who could not afford hardware; then came the piloting of universal credit in the council area. By the time the pandemic hit "there were queues at the door" to see the champion.

Communication was the key, explained the current champion, Paul McKenzie. "Once we've demonstrated our commitment and ability to help with a particular issue they come with, then we're able to have wider, honest conversations." A good example was alcohol misuse: McKenzie might offer an income assessment, to check an individual is accessing all available benefit support. Then he would try a budgeting exercise: do you need to spend all that on alcohol? Have you thought about help to reduce your intake?

As for the current crisis, "the bang won't be felt till February when the credit card and fuel bills come in", said McCarron. It is a looming challenge for the ACDI.

There are plans to extend the champion service to include nearby villages, hold satellite surgeries and train volunteers to run local money advice campaigns.

"With these small pockets of cash we can make a difference," he said.

Guardian and Observer charity appeal 2022: how to make your donation

● Donations can be made online by credit card, debit card or PayPal.
● Go to theguardian.com, scroll down to the Charity Appeal 2022 banner, and click on 'Donate now'.
● As well as using a credit card, debit card or PayPal to make your donation, you can scan the QR code on the right to take you straight to the donations page.
● Alternatively, if you wish to donate by phone, you can call 0151-284 1126.
● We are unfortunately unable to accept cheques.

Police raid Thai garment factory at centre of 'sweatshop' legal case against Tesco

Emily Dugan

Thai police have raided a clothing factory previously used by Tesco that is the subject of a major UK lawsuit over alleged sweatshop conditions.

The Guardian revealed this week that Burmese workers who produced F&F jeans for Tesco in Thailand had reported being trapped in what was effectively forced labour, working 99-hour weeks for illegally low pay.

Thailand's deputy national police chief, General Surachet Hakparn, led a raid at VK Garment factory (VKG) in Mae Sot on Tuesday. With a team of senior police and labour officials, they checked VKG's working conditions and interviewed workers.

Tesco faces a lawsuit in the UK from 130 former workers at VKG in Mae Sot, as well as a seven-year-old girl who was raped in factory accommodation while her mother worked through the evening making F&F clothes. They are suing for alleged negligence and unjust enrichment.

The workers in the lawsuit made jeans and other F&F clothes for the Thai arm of Tesco's business between 2017 and 2020. Tesco, which was not involved in the day-to-day running of the factory, said the allegations were "incredibly serious" and that it would "have ended our relationship with this supplier immediately" had it "identified [the] issues".

▲*Thai police arriving at VK Garment factory in Mae Sot, and, below, talking to people at the site. They and labour ministry officials now plan to interview former workers*
PHOTOGRAPHS: THAI POLICE

Surachet said: "I had a tour of the factory site, worker accommodation and interviewed workers. I found that the company has an issue with wage payment to the workers and that the case is still in process with the labour court." The police and the department of labour protection now plan to interview former workers.

Somchai Homlaor, head of the Human Rights and Development Foundation charity, said the Guardian's report had attracted "big attention from government authorities".

Former workers at VKG said the factory had opened puppet bank accounts, to make it appear they were being paid the minimum wage, while paying them much less in cash. Some said their immigration documents had been held by the factory.

Workers described being paid as little as £3 a day to work until 11pm with one day off a month, and said they had toiled through the night at least once a month for large F&F orders. Some also reported serious injuries, which they said had happened in unsafe working conditions.

Oliver Holland, the solicitor at Leigh Day leading the UK case against Tesco, said the police raid "illustrates how important it is that there is international spotlight on the case".

A spokesperson for Tesco said:

> ***'I had a tour of the factory site. I found VKG has an issue with wage payment'***
>
> **Gen Surachet Hakparn**
> *Thai deputy police chief*

"Protecting the rights of everyone working in our supply chain is absolutely essential to how we do business. In order to uphold our stringent human rights standards, we have a robust auditing process in place across our supply chain and the communities where we operate."

"We understand the Thai labour court has awarded compensation to those involved, and we would continue to urge the supplier to reimburse employees for any wages they're owed."

Sirikul Tatiyawongpaibul, the managing director of VKG, said the inspectors had found nothing illegal, adding: "We have provided safe working conditions to all employees. We are regularly audited by independent auditors who are not affiliated with the company to maintain good working conditions for our employees and as required by law."

She denied the previous reports in the Guardian, calling them "hearsay".

G Handpicked reads

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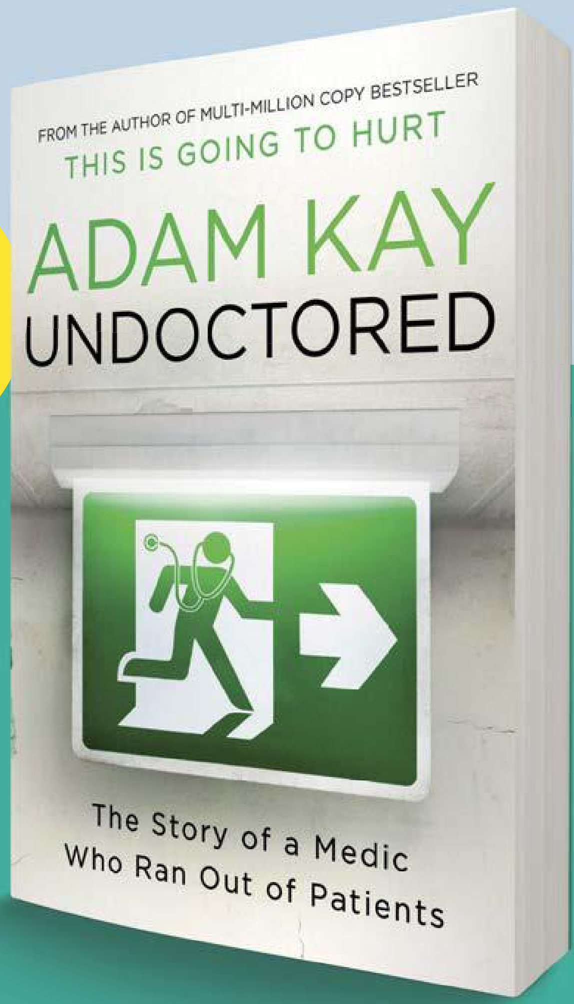

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WHSmith EST 1792 | The Guardian

Top London private school investigated over how it awarded 2021 A-level grades

▲◀ *North London Collegiate School, where senior managers were 'openly excited' at the idea of the school getting its best grades ever, according to a whistleblower*
PHOTOGRAPHS: JEREMY SELWYN/ EVENING STANDARD/ EYEVINE; ALAMY

Richard Adams
Education editor

A prestigious London independent school has faced investigations into the way it awarded exam grades in 2021, when all its A-level entries received A* or A, the Guardian has learned.

Senior leaders and teachers at North London Collegiate School (NLCS), a private girls school that charges fees of £22,000 a year, have been placed under investigation for alleged malpractice in setting teacher-assessed grades, which last year replaced formal exams cancelled by the government because of Covid.

Sources at the school say that more than 20 cases involving NLCS were passed to malpractice committees convened by examination boards that award A-level grades, which held a series of confidential hearings this month. While some of the charges have been dismissed, others have been upheld by the committee. Findings are not publicly available, and the deliberations are confidential.

A spokesperson for Pearson, the exam board involved in the investigations, said: "Where malpractice is found we have systems in place to ensure, as far as possible, that appropriate sanctions are taken. We cannot comment on individual cases."

NLCS declined to state how many malpractice investigations or hearings involving NLCS have occurred. A spokesperson said: "The process and findings of any such investigations are confidential between the exam board and the parties. We can confirm that there has been no finding of centre [school] malpractice by NLCS."

The revelations of investigations will reignite the controversy over the record number of top grades given by independent schools in 2021, with the proportion of A*s soaring by nearly 150% from 2019, when formal exams were last held.

In February the Sunday Times reported that NLCS gave A* to more than 90% of its A-level entries in 2021, the highest in the country and a 56 percentage point increase from the 34% of entries that gained A* in 2019.

> *'Assessing in an alternative way is going to advantage our students'*
>
> **Internal message**
> *School leader*

The cancellation of formal A-level and GCSE exams in 2021 meant grades were awarded by teacher assessment using internal processes giving schools wide latitude.

Evidence passed to the Guardian from teachers and parents at NLCS suggests it was prepared to award the highest possible grades to pupils. One internal message from a senior leader advised staff to "work to ensure the students have a good day, in the way we frame the assessments. That way, every student has the potential to get the grade they could get, rather than the ones they would get."

Teachers were warned that talk of grade inflation was "really unhelpful" and told instead that "assessing in an alternative way is going to advantage our students". Staff were also told there was "clear direction that our grades this year don't need to match previous years' grades".

A staff meeting in March 2021 was told that "these grades will probably be the best grades the school has ever achieved" by its students, adding: "We will be working within the system to create the advantage for them."

A letter to parents, sent in March, outlines how the school planned to alternate lessons with short assessments of the subjects pupils had just studied, a strategy that "will afford our students the best opportunity to maximise their grades".

Staff who complained about the procedures say they were assured rival schools were going to issue inflated grades, so NLCS students could be disadvantaged and could lose out on university places.

The malpractice hearings involving NLCS are the first confirmation of the investigations revealed to MPs in October by Jo Saxton, head of the exam regulator Ofqual. A spokesperson said: "It is not appropriate for us to comment on specific cases."

A letter sent to Ofqual from a whistleblower, seen by the Guardian, claimed of the 2021 situation: "Senior management at NLCS were openly excited at the possibility of obtaining 'our best grades yet', and the allure of this idea propelled them to make decisions that had little integrity, even though they appeared to be within the rules."

Welsh minister talks of his own struggle as he hails change to sex education

Steven Morris

The Welsh education minister has accused campaigners of putting teachers under pressure by deliberately spreading "misinformation" about the teaching of LGBTQ+ issues.

Jeremy Miles told of his struggle to find his place in the world as a gay young person, in an era when "someone like me" did not exist as far as the school curriculum was concerned.

Miles said the new Welsh relationships and sexuality education (RSE) curriculum would give young people "the knowledge they need to safely navigate the modern world". He hoped it would mean young people's introduction to the word "gay" would not be as a playground insult.

Some campaigners against the move claim it "forces LGBTQ+ teaching" on all children from the age of three and characterised the curriculum as "woke" and "dangerous".

Speaking after campaigners lost a high court challenge to the curriculum, Miles said for the youngest pupils, RSE was about learning how to build positive friendships, family life and being kind to each other.

He said he was "appalled" false claims made by some campaigners had put added pressure on schools and staff. "Some schools and teachers have felt pressure from some parents. We can't have that. We can't have campaigners spreading misinformation and taking advantage of parents' anxieties."

Miles, 51, said when he was at school in the Swansea valley "sex education" was limited to one lesson. "It was often delivered with embarrassment and met with giggling. We learned the names of body parts, that sex resulted in pregnancy and very little about safety. Most of us were left to work the rest out for ourselves.

"The previous national curriculum was put in place in 1988. Before the internet, before we fully grasped the importance of mental health, and before many of the advances on equalities and respect we might take for granted."

Miles said Wales had taken a "unique approach" so that all pupils access the lessons and they are integrated into the curriculum. "RSE … is as essential to a pupil's education as maths or science."

▲ *Jeremy Miles said gay children like him did not exist in the curriculum*

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Emma Brockes
Digested week

Three odd forecasts, two crash mats and a heartwarming dog story – it's Christmas

Monday
As we look ahead to next year with renewed hope and vigour, I do the natural thing and turn to astrology. I have form in this area; I'm susceptible to most types of woo – with the exception, obviously, of homeopathy – and make an appointment to see Dr Kumar, the astrological star of the brilliant new podcast, Skyline Drive. In the first episode, he predicts, with shocking accuracy, a plunge in the host's father's health. If I'm going to consult anyone, I want it to be this guy.

Out from Manhattan to Queens I go, to Dr Kumar's front room. He squints at my chart on his screen. I'm simultaneously open to the process and defensively sarcastic about every aspect of it, a form of psychic disdain I'm convinced he picks up on. I have some specific questions in mind, primarily, should I move house, and if so, should I go east or west? Both options appal him. No, no, no, he says. I have to stay where I am, in New York, but I have to move apartments to a property where the front door opens to the north or north-east. The front door of my current apartment opens to the west, which is, says Dr Kumar, my most inauspicious quadrant. Also, I'm probably going to get a UTI in February. Also – Dr Kumar says this quite crossly, appearing to arrive at the intersection between astrology and social conservatism – my children are going to "do better" than me when they grow up, by actually getting married. I would be more irritated by this if he didn't assert, a moment later and with what I decide is total legitimacy, that after April I'm going to be rolling in it.

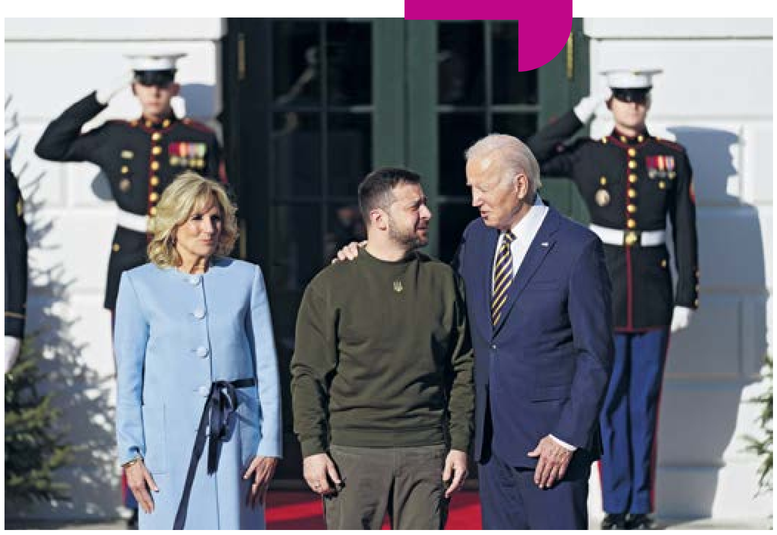
Tuesday
A team from the New York Times tags along with an ambulance crew in Wrexham, Wales, and the result – "One Day With an Ambulance In Britain: Long Waits, Rising Frustration" – is Tuesday's lead on its homepage. It triggers a familiar response in me: firstly, oh, look! Our silly little country has made the front page! Swiftly followed by a wave of: "Oh you think our health system sucks do you? Let's look at your health system". Maybe our ambulances do take six hours to arrive, but at least we don't charge people for the privilege of waiting.

The apportionment of "we" and "your" in this infantile reflex makes little sense but it's a hard habit to break. In spite of promising US immigration authorities that, if push came to shove, I would bear arms for my adopted country, the truth is I can't even bring myself to back the US over England or Great Britain in a sporting event. I wouldn't want to break a leg in the old country, or take a cross-country train, or pay an electricity bill, or run a small business reliant on export to Europe. Still, I can't help constructing a teetering edifice of superiority on the fact we have better bread and cheese.

Wednesday
I'd ordered a crash mat for my children for Christmas, partly to stop them fashioning their own by pulling all the cushions off the sofa, partly as an increasingly desperate measure to get them off their screens. This thing was big – 5ft (152cm) square by 1ft high, but I figured I could stash it under the bed. When the delivery window changed and it threatened to arrive after Christmas, I attempted to pull off – never do this! – some canny Amazon jiu-jitsu. I'd order a different mat, from a different provider, with an earlier delivery date and a more generous returns policy, then switch it out for the other one after Christmas. Now, obviously, both of these monstrous items are arriving on Christmas Eve, I'm $400 down, and (hmm, should've read the fine print) Amazon charges a $48 postal fee for returns. Where am I supposed to stash two enormous crash mats? Why does this problem feel so insurmountable? Why didn't I just say yes to the Nintendo?

'I'll sign off on the entire $44bn if you teach me how to rock the camo look'

PHOTOGRAPHS: BERND LAUTER/GETTY; ANDREW HARNIK/AP



'Please tell me that wasn't you'

Thursday
The award for most charming Christmas story of the week goes to the Washington Post for its tale of Princess Fiona, a "balding, pot-bellied" pit-bull, with chunks of fur missing, a chronic illness, and a comical, waddling gait. So many times, at the animal shelter in Washington DC, Princess Fiona was trotted out for a prospective adoptive family to view. So many times, she waddled back to her pen – belly dragging on the floor, skinny tail wagging sadly, stress-related health issues adding semi-incontinence to her woes – having been rejected out of hand. And then, right before Christmas, at a public adoption event in a mall, Princess Fiona met five-year-old Myami.

Myami's mother took one look at the dog and asked if she was pregnant. Gently, Princess Fiona's carer explained about her health condition and what it might take to care for her, waiting for the family to move off. But something had taken. While Myami fed Princess Fiona a cheese stick, her mother contemplated the dog and thought about how her 19-year-old son had been written off by some people for his medical needs. The next day, the family came to pick up Princess Fiona for good. When they left, the place erupted into cheers. I'm trying very hard to have faith in the God-bless-you-all vibe of this and resist the temptation to assume she'll be returned to the shelter after Christmas.

Friday
It's over, finally. This week has dragged like no week has dragged since childhood. Scrooge-like, the public schools in New York are open right up to Christmas Eve and we have crawled combat-style towards our week off: on elbows and knees, late every day, hair unbrushed, homework undone. From 4pm today no one's moving from the sofa – or the carpet of crash mats about to cover my living space – until Boxing Day. Happy Christmas.

TV review

Slight tale falls short on thrills and chills

Count Magnus
BBC Two
★★☆☆☆

Lucy Mangan

It's a project that has always had a slight air of Mean Girls' Gretchen gamely trying to make "fetch" happen, but 'tis the season of goodwill and all that so let us continue to try to embrace BBC Two's attempt to make an MR James adaptation by Mark Gatiss a Beloved Christmas Tradition.

Last year, if you remember, it was the turn of The Mezzotint, the tale – pleasantly spookily and cosily told – of a possibly possessed picture. Its gentle progression through just enough twists and turns to fill a half hour was a lovely little treat.

This year it is the turn of Count Magnus, whose very slight and unvisual plot struggles to fill a fraction of that time in the same engaging manner. Travelogue writer and researcher Mr Wraxhall (described as "overinquisitive" by Krister Henriksson's narrator, and perfectly played by Jason Watkins to inspire a blend of affection and irritation) is visiting Sweden. He has come to a small, snowy village to investigate the correspondence kept in the archives of an ancient manor house. It was built by heavily moustachioed local landowner and legend Count Magnus and is now occupied by spectrally pale widow Froken de la Gardie (MyAnna Buring), her remaining servant Gustav (Jamal Ajala) and a variety of unsettling ancestral portraits (that's how I know about the heavy moustachioing).

Wraxhall's hostess offers him lodgings – "The house has been so silent, so sad" – but he declines and goes to stay at the local inn, so we can get more input about the mysterious count from the innkeeper Herr Nielsen (Max Bremer). Count Magnus "is not kindly remembered", says Nielsen, from which I gather him to be a master of understatement.

Mr Wraxhall goes off on investigations: he finds papers about the pilgrimage in the family archive and visits the count's mausoleum in the local church grounds, where a padlock from one of the chains round his tomb has fallen off. There are coded conversations with the deacon about the count's general rumness followed by a jump scare with Nielsen, who tells him about a villager whose face was sucked off by the count's suspected companion. A final visit to the mausoleum and the tomb opens, tentacles wiggle out and poor Wraxhall is tipped into madness.

▲ *The deacon (Allan Corduner), left, and Mr Wraxhall (Jason Watkins)*

This is a production with but a single jump scare in its arsenal and his end occurs entirely off screen. One tiny additional twist from Gatiss and that's yer lot. I have had more thrills from a Misty comic strip, but it passed the time and kept a lot of nice actors in gainful employ. I hope for a return to form, or if not a selection of Misty annuals from eBay next year. Santa, please take note.

Eyewitnessed
Pictures of the week

▶ *Kamala Harris and Nancy Pelosi hold a Ukrainian flag signed by soldiers, a gift from Volodymyr Zelenskiy, centre, on his US visit*
PHOTOGRAPH: TING SHEN/BLOOMBERG

▲ *The Milky Way over Llyn Llydaw in Snowdonia, winner of third prize in the Mountain Photo of the Year competition*
PHOTOGRAPH: LUKE GAGE

◀ *Participants in the Coupe de Noël, a Christmas swim in Lake Geneva, get ready to start*
PHOTOGRAPH: VALENTIN FLAURAUD/EPA

◀ Lionel Messi, centre, and his Argentina team-mates celebrate winning the World Cup. They beat France on penalties after a thrilling final
PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCK FIFE/AFP/GETTY

▲ Goldfinches captured in mid-air while feuding over food in a garden in Cleethorpes
PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES GREGORY/SOLENT NEWS

▲ Fire crews battle a wildfire in Viña del Mar, Chile, that has forced dozens of evacuations
PHOTOGRAPH: ADRIANA THOMASA/EPA-EFE

◀ People greet the sunrise, and the prospect of longer days, at Stonehenge on Thursday, the day after the winter solstice
PHOTOGRAPH: FINNBARR WEBSTER/GETTY

Environment

Avian flu 'causing new Silent Spring of destruction', top scientist warns

Phoebe Weston

The planet is experiencing a new "Silent Spring" of wildlife destruction because so many wild birds have died from avian flu, according to a leading scientist, who said the past year had had the most significant and sudden loss of birds in decades.

James Pearce-Higgins, director of science at the British Trust for Ornithology, said: "The last time we experienced such large-scale and rapid losses of wild birds in the UK would be the impacts of DDT [pesticide] on birds of prey in the 1950s and 1960s associated with the Silent Spring narrative, or the widespread declines of farmland birds during the 1970s and 80s as a result of agricultural intensification."

The Silent Spring narrative refers to the seminal 1962 book by Rachel Carson about how pesticides, particularly DDT, were killing birds. DDT caused egg shells to become so thin that adults crushed them during incubation, leading to nest failure and the deaths of thousands of birds.

The World Organisation for Animal Health estimates that more than 50,000 wild birds have died of the highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 since October 2021, mainly in Europe and America. But experts say this is likely to be a huge underestimate. In the UK alone, numbers could be in the hundreds of thousands.

In the UK, the effects of avian flu started in the northernmost islands of Scotland in spring, spreading down England's east coast and reaching as far south as Sussex, with colonies of nesting seabirds the worst hit.

There are already more than a dozen outbreaks across the country among wintering waterbirds. This suggests it is widespread and will be found in breeding seabird colonies again next year, said Pearce-Higgins.

There were more than 3,500 virus detections in wild birds across Europe in the 2021-2022 season, with reports from 37 countries that it was being seen in 63 wild bird species, according to an overview published by the European Food Safety Authority. For wild birds, Germany, France, the Netherlands and the UK had the most reported cases, with most coming from coastal areas because seabirds were the worst affected.

The first US case in this outbreak was in an American wigeon duck in South Carolina on 14 January 2022. Since then, there have been 3,700 positive tests in 47 states, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says. However, only a fraction of birds that die will be sent for testing, experts say.

"Reported numbers are likely a vast underestimate," said Dr Michelle Wille from the University of Sydney. "For example, of the approximate 8,000 sandwich terns that died in the Netherlands, only a handful are included in the official numbers - in this case a more than 200x difference between reported numbers and observed. The lack of appreciation for the scale of wild bird mortality is concerning as there may be species/population level ramifications."

Most reports are coming from Europe, then America, according to UN data, but the disease has also spread through Africa and Asia. In November bird flu was found in South America, with concerns it will reach the Galápagos. Scientists suspect a migratory Franklin's gull brought the subtype H5N1 from the US. More than 13,000 seabirds died, including more than 5,500 pelicans in Peru.

It has since spread to five countries in South America, according to the Pan American Health Organization. "The high-pathogenicity avian influenza outbreak recently reported for coastal Peru is a severe situation … evidence has shown the possibility of the virus spreading among other groups of birds," said Luis German Naranjo, the conservation director at WWF Colombia.

The UK has about 60% of the world population of great skua and northern gannets. Both have seen "unprecedented levels of mortality", said Pearce-Higgins, with impacts likely to last decades as they are long-lived, slow reproducing species.

Experts say the picture will become clearer in coming years, as we see how many migratory seabirds return to breed, giving a better idea of how many died.

> *'Lack of appreciation for the scale of wild bird mortality is concerning'*
>
> **Michelle Wille**
> *University of Sydney*

Colonies ravaged 'I'm haunted by the number of dead skua I saw'

Phoebe Weston

It is more than a year since avian flu began to devastate wild birds in large numbers, and conservationists are fearful of what 2023 will hold. The highly infectious variant of H5N1 has caused Europe's worst bird flu season and has spread across the globe with little sign of slowing.

In the UK, there were reports of some great skua dying from the H5N1 variant in the summer of 2021 but the mass die-offs started in the autumn and winter. More than a third of Svalbard barnacle geese in the Solway Firth, on the border of England and Scotland - 16,500 out of 43,000 - died last winter.

A year later, there has been no letup, with Greenland barnacle geese on the Scottish island of Islay (the other main site where these geese overwinter) dropping dead in increasingly large numbers. "I'm sitting with a sense of dread that it definitely will get worse as I see more reports coming in from reserves across the UK," says Claire Smith from RSPB Scotland. "I'm haunted by the numbers of dead great skua that I saw on Shetland in the summer and I'm avoiding going birdwatching on the coast."

From April to mid-August 2022 avian flu ravaged colonies of seabirds in the UK, peaking in June at the height of the breeding season. Seabirds generally migrate over summer, so numbers dropped again, but already there are outbreaks across the country among wintering waterbirds. There have been cases in the south-west, the Midlands, East Anglia, Wales and the Isle of Man, with greylag geese, pink-footed geese, Canada geese and mute swans among the most affected.

Red-listed herring gulls across the north-east are already being affected, with dead puffins washing up in Norfolk. They are yet to be tested, but the presumed cause of death is bird flu.

Cases in other groups of birds

▲ National Trust rangers clear dead birds from Staple Island, one of the outer group of the Farne Islands
PHOTOGRAPH: OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA

have been reported all over the country, and the RSPB called for a temporary ban on the release of game birds this year to lessen the risk of spreading avian flu, but this was not taken up by government. Positive tests in peregrine falcons, buzzards, wild tawny owls and rooks have been recorded in recent months. Although there are not the same big die-offs, there are a lot of cases over a wide area, with more in urban and semi-urban areas. Positive tests are not an indication of the actual number of birds affected because few carcasses are found, let alone tested.

"We can expect HPAI [highly pathogenic avian influenza] to persist into the next breeding season and beyond, with unpredictable consequences," a report from the International Seabird Group conference warned in November.

It is a case of waiting to see what happens next, says Prof Ian Brown, head of virology at the government's Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Commercial hens can be shut up, but you cannot control the movement of wild birds.

"That horse has bolted," he says. "It is unusual that this particular event is dominated by one particular strain over such a big geographical area. I can't remember any time since 1996 [when H5N1 started], where a single strain has caused so much global spread."

Bird flu is highly infectious, with scientists saying one bird can infect as many as 100, with the virus present in faeces, mucus, blood and saliva. "You need a very tiny quantity – a teaspoon of faeces will probably be enough to kill an entire house of chickens or turkeys," says Brown.

The most common transmission between wild birds and poultry is probably indirectly, through birds in the nearby environment. Unpublished studies have shown that at 4C the virus can stay in the environment for six weeks, according to Brown. It could be someone walking across a field and treading in infected bird droppings, and then failing to disinfect their boots before going into the poultry house. Or it could be transferred on bedding, or possibly via rodents.

▲ A dead northern gannet in Pleumeur-Bodou off the coast of Perros-Guirec in Brittany, France
PHOTOGRAPH: STÉPHANE MAHÉ/REUTERS

Brown says that more than 99% of cases in poultry in the UK have come from wild birds. The APHA knows this by working out the genome of a virus and comparing what it looks like in wild birds with its appearance in poultry. The researchers also look at the affected farm and possible routes of infection into poultry houses.

Prof Kin-Chow Chang, from the veterinary school at the University of Nottingham, agrees commercial populations are getting it either directly or indirectly from wild birds. "The virus is very infectious, it doesn't need a lot to start an infection," he says

Little is known about the number of birds with antibodies. Because vaccinations for wild birds are not considered a feasible option, they will need to get some sort of herd immunity. Brown says: "There is a very small proportion of birds that can get infected, can recover from infection and then have immunity which means they won't get that virus again. And over time that would build, but we don't understand that at all. We need to do further work. That research is being commissioned and happening across the world."

The present variant of H5N1 originated in south-east Asia, where it was found in commercial geese. For the past four years, these strains of avian flu have been highly pathogenic, meaning they cause severe disease and death. Scientists at the University of Edinburgh are trying to work out why the current strain is causing longer and larger outbreaks than those that came before, which will also help forecast how the disease will evolve and spread in the future. It could be down to changes in the surface proteins on the virus, meaning they can more easily attach to wild birds, or it may be more stable in the environment, so the virus could live in a pond over summer rather than breaking down in warm temperatures and sunlight as have previous bird flu viruses. It may become less damaging when sufficient numbers of birds have been infected, or the virus could evolve again, making it easier to spill into other species – including humans and other mammals.

In August, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said mitigation strategies "are not very effective in reducing transmission within seabird colonies". However, there are other ways to reduce the pressures seabirds are under, as they have already been hit by threats including habitat loss, overfishing and the climate crisis. Since 1986, the UK's population of breeding seabirds has fallen by almost a quarter. Reducing these other pressures would make them more resilient to bird flu, says Smith.

The RSPB says it is generally not picking up dead birds on its reserves because it risks the health of the people doing it, and causes disturbance among living birds, which could spread the disease further. Visitors are asked to keep dogs on leads and to clean their shoes thoroughly before and after visiting.

However, other wildlife groups, such as those working for the National Trust, have decided to collect carcasses to reduce the risk of the disease spreading if they are scavenged. Conservationists want better monitoring and surveillance of the disease in wild birds, as well as clearer arrangements for carcass collection.

Chang says: "This will be the equivalent to our Covid pandemic, because we're dealing with major outbreaks, major fatalities, and possibly major disruption to the domestic poultry production market as well."

The public should not touch dead or dying birds, and should report suspected bird flu cases to Defra on 03459 33 55 77.

Lost and found No 9. Amanita sculpta

"The cap is like a chocolate chip cookie," says Serena Lee, senior manager at Singapore Botanic Gardens' herbarium, describing the top of the sculptured toadstool (Amanita sculpta). "It's big and chunky, and has a beige and dark brown cap with warts."

Despite its distinctive appearance and a large fruiting body from 10cm to 27cm wide, the sculptured toadstool went awol in Singapore for more than 80 years. It was first collected in the 163-hectare (402-acre) Bukit Timah nature reserve in 1939, and was described as a new species in 1962 by a former assistant director of the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

It has since been occasionally recorded in other parts of Asia, including Malaysia, Thailand, China, Japan and Laos, but is thought to be rare and has been put up for assessment for the IUCN red list. There were no sightings in Singapore until 2020, when a member of the public posted a photo of a toadstool in its bud stage to a Facebook group about the flora of Malaysia and Singapore. "I like exploring different plants and mushrooms that I haven't seen before," says Serene Toh. "What captured my attention in this case was the toadstool's attractive colour and appearance."

The photo was sent to Lee who, with members of Singapore's parks board, tracked it down to the base of a Shorea leprosula tree, along the road to the summit of Bukit Timah Hill. "It was a magnificent specimen," says Lee. "Its cap was 27cm wide – by far the largest non-bracket type macrofungus we've ever seen in Singapore."

It may seem strange such a striking toadstool went unseen for so long. "Despite the large size of its fruiting body, its dark shadowy colours help it to camouflage against the background," says Lee. "So it's difficult to spot it if you're not consciously looking for it."

Graeme Green

The distinctive Amanita sculpta

World

Trump should be barred from holding office again, says January 6 panel

Edward Helmore
David Smith *Washington*

The House select committee investigating the January 6 attack on the US Capitol has recommended in its final report that Donald Trump should be barred from holding office again.

The former US president is again running for the White House and is seen as the leading contender for the Republican party's 2024 nomination. However, his campaign has been a damp squib so far and his political fortunes battered by the poor performance of Trump-backed candidates in the November midterms and the emergence of rival figures within the party, notably the Florida governor Ron DeSantis.

Across 814 pages of the report, published late on Thursday night, the Democrat-led committee laid out findings that placed blame squarely on "one man" for the violent events that engulfed the legislative seat of the US government for several hours in 2021.

"The central cause of January 6th was one man, former President Donald Trump, whom many others followed," said the report, released overnight, in a punchy two-sentence summary. "None of the events of January 6th would have happened without him."

In extensive detail, the committee accused the former president of "a multipart plan to overturn the 2020 presidential election". Trump's conduct on that day, it says, warrants implementation of a constitutional ban on the New York real estate developer from holding elected office again.

Prior to 6 January 2021, it continued, Trump and his inner circle engaged in "at least 200 apparent acts of public or private outreach, pressure, or condemnation", between the day of the election and 6 January.

The panel conducted more than 1,000 interviews, held 10 public hearings – some televised on primetime – and collected more than 1m documents since forming in July last year.

The panel was formed in the summer of 2021 after Senate Republicans blocked the formation of what would have been a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate the insurrection. When that effort failed, the Democratic-controlled House formed an investigative committee of its own, comprising seven Democrats and two Republicans: Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois.

On Monday, it voted to refer Trump to the Department of Justice (DoJ) on at least four criminal charges, including insurrection and obstruction of an official proceeding of Congress.

Among the evidence presented in the panel's final report was that there had been 68 meetings, attempted or connected phone calls, or text messages aimed at pressuring state or local officials toward the goal of overturning the election's results.

"President Trump's decision to declare victory falsely on election night and, unlawfully, to call for the vote counting to stop, was not a spontaneous decision. It was premeditated," the report states.

The committee also described how Trump, his campaign and the Republican National Committee used claims that the election was stolen to collect more than $250m ($207m) in political fundraising.

In a bombshell video deposition released earlier this week, Hope Hicks,a former White House communications director, said Trump knew the claims were false and had dismissed the lawyer Sidney Powell's theories of foreign interference in the election as "crazy".

The committee cost taxpayers $3m, employed about 57 people, and spent hundreds of thousands more on outside consultants and services.

The report adds to political pressure already on the attorney general, Merrick Garland, and Jack Smith, the special counsel who is conducting an investigation into the insurrection and Trump's actions.

After the findings were published, Trump hit back on his own social media platform with a typically misspelt message. "The highly partisan Unselect Committee Report purposely fails to mention the failure of Pelosi to heed my recommendation for troops to be used in DC, show the 'Peacefully and Patrioticly' words I used, or study the reason for the protest, Election Fraud", Trump posted on Truth Social.

The January 6 committee's report offers a clear analysis of the events leading up to that day and a path toward using the 14th amendment against insurrection to bar Trump and his allies from future office.

"Our country has come too far to allow a defeated president to turn himself into a successful tyrant by upending our democratic institutions, fomenting violence, and, as I saw it, opening the door to those in our country whose hatred and bigotry threaten equality and justice for all Americans," said the Mississippi Democratic congressman and committee chair, Bennie Thompson, in the foreword. The findings, published days before Republicans take control of the lower legislative house, automatically dissolving the panel, offers the DoJ a comparative text to its own investigation.

814
Pages in the detailed final report of the House January 6 select committee, published on Thursday

68
Meetings, phonecalls or texts trying to pressure officials to overturn election results, the report found

▲ *The January 6 committee at its final session* PHOTOGRAPH: MATT MCCLAIN/WP/GETTY

'This is serious stuff': US faces one of coldest Christmas Days on record

Jon Henley

More than 200 million people in nearly every US state are under various winter weather alerts, including for wind chill, ice and heavy snow, as a huge winter storm system threatens travel chaos and one of the coldest Christmas Days on record.

The coast to coast alerts extend as far south as Florida, with blizzard conditions expected in the Great Lakes region, up to 5cm of rain and a flash freeze on the east coast, and wind gusts of 60 miles an hour on the Mexican border.

Thousands of homes have been left without power, and governors in at least 13 states have drawn up emergency response plans, including National Guard deployments, with heavy snow and ice creating treacherous road conditions and some drivers stranded.

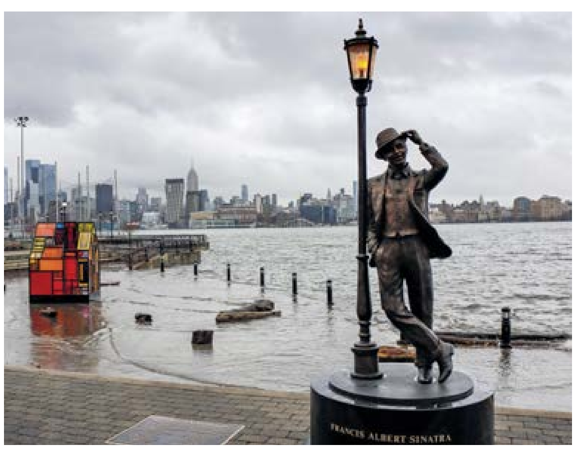
The National Weather Service (NWS) said it expected a weather phenomenon known as a bomb cyclone – a rapidly strengthening storm that drops 24 millibars of pressure within 24 hours – to develop. The cyclone, with a pressure likely to match that of a category 2 hurricane, could bring snowfall of 1.3cm an hour, the

Christmas in Spain
Ukrainians celebrate away from home
Page 27

Wildlife crime
South Africa rangers learn CSI techniques
Page 28

◀ *A man walks his dog near the lake in Chicago, where sub-zero temperatures are expected*
PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

◀ *A family picking their way across a snowy street in Buffalo, New York, yesterday*
PHOTOGRAPH: DEREK GEE/AP



▶ *The Hudson River spilling over a river wall in Hoboken, New Jersey, facing the skyline of midtown Manhattan*
PHOTOGRAPH: GARY HERSHORN/GETTY

'[The state of Georgia is] expecting weather we haven't seen in a decade or more'

Brian Kemp
State governor

weather service said, leading to "dangerous, at times impossible, land and air travel" up to the holiday weekend. "This is not like a snow day when you were a kid, this is serious stuff," the president, Joe Biden, said on Thursday.

Temperatures in Colorado that day dipped to a record-breaking low of -9F (-22.7C) from 42F (5.5C), while Cheyenne, Wyoming, recorded its greatest one-hour temperature drop, plunging from 43F to 3F in 30 minutes. The NWS said temperatures of -50F to -70F were possible over the weekend in some parts of the US, warning that even in big metropolitan areas such as Des Moines, Iowa, frostbite could become a significant danger.

Ahead of one of the busiest travel periods of the year, the American Automobile Association (AAA) said more than 112 million people planned to travel 50 miles or more from home between 23 December and 2 January.

More than 2,000 US flights scheduled for Thursday and yesterday were cancelled, according to the flight-tracking service FlightAware, including more than 700 at two major airports in Chicago and hundreds more in Denver.

The New York state governor, Kathy Hochul, declared an emergency, saying the threat of flooding and ice jams blocking rivers would "wreak a lot of havoc in our community". The Ohio governor, Mike DeWine, called it "a unique and dangerous situation".

In Georgia, where temperatures in the north were forecast to hit -12C, with subzero wind chills, the governor Brian Kemp said the state was "expecting weather we haven't seen in a decade or more."

More than half of the so-called lower 48 states, from Washington state to Florida, are under winter weather alerts, including wind chill advisories affecting about 135 million people, said Ashton Robinson Cook of the weather service's prediction centre.

Travel conditions, already bad in the Great Plains region, are forecast to deteriorate in the midwest and Great Lakes area as the cold front moves east, with more than a foot of snow and whiteout conditions expected in some areas.The NWS has described the storm as "once in a generation".

▲ *Members of the Kurdish community clash with police near the scene of the shooting yesterday*
PHOTOGRAPH: LEWIS JOLY/AP

Shooting at Kurdish centre in Paris leaves three dead and three others wounded

Jon Henley
Paris

Three people were killed and another three wounded, one critically, in a shooting at a Kurdish cultural centre in Paris yesterday that the government said appeared to have been racially motivated.

The newspaper Le Parisien reported that a 69-year-old man opened fire on a group of people at the Ahmet-Kaya centre on Rue d'Enghien in the 10th arrondissement yesterday morning.

Shots were also fired at a hairdresser's and a restaurant in the street, the arrondissement's mayor, Alexandra Cordebard, told BFM TV. The suspect was wounded in the face and taken to hospital, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors said police arrested the alleged gunman, who had a police record and previous convictions for assault and possession of an illegal weapon, and seized a weapon soon after the shooting.

Le Monde said the victims were all members of the Kurdish community and had died inside and in front of the cultural centre. A spokesperson for the centre, Agit Polat, accused French authorities of "once more failing to protect us … For us, this is a terrorist attack."

Several hundred Kurds gathered outside the centre and in the streets nearby yesterday afternoon in protest at the shootings. People scuffled with and threw rocks at police, who responded with teargas. Eleven officers were wounded, police said.

A further demonstration is planned at the capital's Place de la République today.

In January 2013 three Kurdish female activists, including Sakine Cansız, a co-founder of the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), were shot dead at a Kurdish information centre near the cultural centre. Their suspected killer, Ömer Güney, a Turkish national, died of a brain tumour in a Paris hospital in 2016 before his trial.

The French interior minister, Gérald Darmanin, said at the scene of yesterday's shooting that it was "not certain … that the gunman was specifically targeting the Kurdish community" but more likely "foreigners in general". More should be known about his motives after he had been questioned by police, he said.

According to local media reports, the man – reportedly a retired train driver – had been released from preventive detention on 12 December after a sword attack on migrants living in tents in December last year for which he had not yet been tried.

The suspect reportedly had also been arrested twice previously: in 2016 for attempted manslaughter, and in 2019 for illegal weapons possession. Le Parisien cited an unnamed police source as saying he told officers during his arrest yesterday he "did not like Kurds".

Laure Beccuau, the Paris prosecutor, did not immediately confirm the suspect's criminal record, saying it was still being examined. An investigation had been opened for murder, voluntary manslaughter and aggravated violence, she told reporters.

Beccuau said France's national anti-terrorism prosecution service had visited the scene but there was at present no evidence to suggest it would take over the case. A possible racist motive would "obviously be part of the investigation", she added.

The French prime minister, Élisabeth Borne, described the attack as a "vile act", expressing her gratitude to police and emergency services for their rapid response and her sympathy with the victims' families.

The Paris mayor, Anne Hidalgo, said psychological assistance would be made available to people affected by the incident.

Libya fury at transfer of suspect to US halts second handover

Jason Burke
Africa correspondent

The extradition to the US of Muammar Gaddafi's most trusted and notorious aide was abruptly halted by Libya at the 11th hour this week for fear of public anger after the handover of another ex-senior Libyan intelligence operative, officials in Tripoli have told the Guardian.

Abdullah al-Senussi, a former intelligence chief and brother-in-law of Gaddafi, is blamed for a series of lethal bombings directed at western aviation as well as other targets.

The US want the 72-year-old, who is in prison in Tripoli and thought to be in ill health, to answer questions over the attack that brought down a US-bound aircraft over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988. Senussi has long been suspected of masterminding the operation, which killed 270 people.

This month the US announced that another Libyan suspect in the Lockerbie bombing, Mohammed Abouagela Masud, was in its custody. Masud was taken from his Tripoli home by armed men on 17 November, held for two weeks by a militia and then handed over to US government agents in the port city of Misrata.

His family said he had been unlawfully abducted. The US embassy in Libya said the process had been "lawful and conducted in cooperation with Libyan authorities".

The handover provoked outrage in Libya, putting the government of the interim prime minister, Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, under severe pressure and leading to the shelving of plans to transfer Senussi to US custody. "The idea was to have Masud sent to the US first and then give them Senussi. There have been discussions for months about this. But then officials got worried," said one Libyan official source with knowledge of the case. A second said Senussi was meant to be handed over at the weekend.

Known as "the butcher", Senussi was sentenced to death in a mass trial that concluded in 2015. Considered Gaddafi's most trusted aide, Senussi has had a reputation for brutality since the mid-1970s and his name appeared as No 2 on an opposition list of wanted "war criminals".

▲ *Abdullah al-Senussi, pictured with Muammar Gaddafi, is blamed for a series of deadly bombings*
PHOTOGRAPH: SABRI ELMHEDWI/EPA

Bringing him before a US court would be a significant, if controversial, achievement for the Biden administration and may signal a new determination to pursue decades-old cases involving the deaths of US citizens. The effort to secure the transfer of Masud and Senussi was launched under Donald Trump's administration but has been revived over the last nine months through discussions between US officials and the Libyan government, the sources said.

The international criminal court issued an arrest warrant for Senussi in 2011 for his role in violence against opposition protesters in the eastern city of Benghazi at the start of the Libyan uprising.

Successive Libyan governments insisted on prosecuting Senussi on home soil. The ICC decided in 2013 that as Libya had put Senussi on trial it would halt its own proceedings against him. The former intelligence chief was eventually condemned to death in 2015 after the mass trial, which was severely criticised by human rights campaigners.

It is unclear if the transfer of Senussi to the US has been shelved indefinitely, or merely postponed.

Alia Brahimi, an expert on Libya with the Atlantic Council, said the case demonstrated a tension between the demands of the law and justice.

"Senussi is suspected of a great many crimes and the possibility that he might answer for one of them, an act of mass murder no less, is extraordinary," Brahimi said. "Any transfer would generate enormous controversy, whatever the circumstances, as did that of Masud, and rightly so. But the lasting story will be about the long arm of American justice, and it will be heard around the world.

"Successive transitional governments [in Libya] have struggled to hold members of the old regime accountable in a transparent and ordered way, because of the chaos which has prevailed since the revolution but also because of the continuing power of regime interest groups."

The family of Senussi and tribes still loyal to him have threatened unrest if he is transferred to the US.

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Zelenskiy's White House trip shows US and Ukraine are 'strategic partners', says aide

Dan Sabbagh
Luke Harding

Volodymyr Zelenskiy's visit to the White House confirmed that Ukraine and the US are "strategic partners" for the first time in history, the Ukrainian leader's most senior adviser said in an interview on his return home.

Andriy Yermak, the head of the Ukrainian leader's office, told the Guardian that the trip on Wednesday had cemented Zelenskiy's bond with Joe Biden – and with senior US Republicans, despite "dirty" comments made by the Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

The summit and press conference between the two leaders this week demonstrated that the US is "a real leader of the free world and democracy", Yermak said.

His emphasis on the personal links forged by the surprise visit, the first time that Zelenskiy has been outside Ukraine since the start of the war, comes despite a failure to immediately obtain the US Abrams tanks, F-16 fighter jets and long-range ATACMS missiles that Ukraine has said it needs to defeat Russia.

But it demonstrates a belief in Kyiv that it must emphasise the moral dimension of its fight against the invading Russian army and its faith in its relationship with the US, to unlock more and more of the military aid it badly needs as the war heads towards its first anniversary in February.

"It's the first time in history that Ukraine and the United States are close as strategic partners. There is a very warm, very friendly relationship, personal relationship between the two presidents," said Yermak, who was by Zelenskiy's side during the trip.

As well as the meeting with Biden, Yermak highlighted meetings between Zelenskiy and US congressional leaders, including those with senior Republicans Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader, and Kevin McCarthy, the leading candidate to become House speaker next month.

Yermak contrasted that with the attitude of Carlson, who said Zelenskiy looked like "a manager of a strip club" who should have been thrown out of Congress for wearing his trademark khaki fatigues when he addressed legislators.

Carlson was "saying dirty things", Yermak said, but "he's not the voice of the Republican party, he's not the voice of the GOP and I can make that conclusion after we met with representatives of GOP in the Congress".

During the visit, Biden did announce \$1.85bn (£1.5bn) in new military assistance to Ukraine. This included the delivery of a single Patriot missile defence system, a longstanding request from Kyiv to help it defend its cities and electricity grid, now prone to repeated blackout after sustained Russian bombing.

Now back in Kyiv, speaking via a video call, Yermak said he believed this would help unlock other military support. "I hope that we will receive everything which we need and this visit will send a very strong signal for all allies that our United States believes in our victory," he said.

Yermak declined to say when or where Ukraine might launch its next counter-attack, but he predicted 2023 would be a decisive year in the war. "We will do everything we can to retake our territory. I understand it will be difficult and hard work. Our great brave nation will continue to fight. I'm sure next year really will be victory year."

▲ *Andriy Yermak, the most senior adviser to the Ukrainian president*

Asked if victory included taking back Crimea, annexed by Russia in 2014, he replied: "Absolutely." The US administration has not explicitly backed Zelenskiy's vow to reclaim the peninsula – a mission that most analysts believe would be difficult for Ukraine's army.

Yermak said he did not want to speculate on Vladimir Putin's trip to Belarus this week to meet its dictator, Alexander Lukashenko, in the capital, Minsk. A buildup of Russian troops along the border with Ukraine has fuelled fears Putin may be planning to again attack from the north, in another attempt to seize Kyiv.

"We have danger along the whole border," Yermak said, emphasising: "I'm not keen to know what's going on inside Putin's head." He said Kyiv got intelligence from its partners, and from its frontline soldiers, and was ready for "any kind of provocation".

Asked how Zelenskiy was bearing up, Yermak said: "He's OK." He added: "Of course he's working a lot. For him this is normal … He's a responsible person and deeply involved in everything: weapons, military strategy, energy and economic issues. He's the best choice of the Ukrainian people."

Yermak concluded: "There are terrible tragedies: we are losing the best people. But we will definitely win."

◀ *Ukrainian children celebrating St Nicholas' Day in Lviv this week*

PHOTOGRAPH: OLENA ZNAK/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY

Christmas in Spain New customs and friends for refugees from Kyiv

Sam Jones
Madrid

Christmas will be different this year for Faig Budagov, his wife, Olga, daughter, Alisa, and his mother-in-law, Katerina. The Russian invasion in February forced them to swap Ukraine for Spain, and Orthodox Christmas for a Roman Catholic one.

The family plan to spend the festive period in their two rooms in a hostel in the Spanish city of Segovia, and to socialise with the 20 or so other Ukrainian families they have befriended in the area.

"Usually this holiday is celebrated at a fancy table with many dishes, snacks and desserts, accompanied by copious amounts of strong alcoholic beverages and wine," says Budagov. "We will celebrate this Christmas without much fanfare, since here we simply do not have the opportunities and conditions for celebrating the way we do in Ukraine."

There will be no kutia – a dish of boiled wheat, chopped nuts, crushed poppy seeds and honey – but there will be Skype calls and WhatsApp messages to friends and family in Ukraine, and chats with their new Spanish friends.

Despite being forced to flee Kyiv, the family know they are fortunate. "We will gladly join this celebration," says Budagov. "But we'll also be thinking about the war that's still going on in Ukraine, the destruction it has brought, the deaths of women, children and old men, and the deaths of the soldiers at the front. People in most regions of Ukraine will be celebrating this Christmas without heat, electricity and water."

Celebrating Christmas Day on 25 December rather than 7 January, the day Orthodox Christians honour the birth of Christ, is one of the lesser adjustments the family have made since arriving in Spain on 12 March. At first they lived in a house in a small town an hour's drive north-west of Madrid. While they will always be grateful to their host, Eduardo, and his family, they moved to Segovia in August as they missed the bustle of a big city. They had fallen in love with Segovia after visiting the city in April.

> *'People in Ukraine will celebrate without heat and water'*
>
> **Faig Budagov**
> *Ukrainian refugee*

For the foreseeable future, Spain – which has hosted more than 155,000 Ukrainians so far – is home. "The hospitality, tolerance and kindness people have shown us here has touched the depths of our souls," says Budagov. "We're glad we are here, and we can only be proud of the fact that we spend some part of our lives in Spain."

He is still struggling to come to terms with what has happened in Ukraine, saying: "Christians are killing Christians; Orthodox people are killing Orthodox people, and brothers are killing brothers."

▼ *The Wildlife Forensic Academy, where students and rangers can practise techniques on fake crime scenes* PHOTOGRAPHS: TOMMY TRENCHARD

CSI for wildlife

South African academy trains rangers to help convict poachers

Tommy Trenchard

A rhino lies sprawled on its side in the sand, its horns sawn off and trails of crimson blood flowing from bullet holes in its thick grey hide. The scene is a familiar one in South Africa, where more than 8,000 have been killed by poachers for their horns over the past decade.

This time, however, the crime scene is fake. The rhino is stuffed, the blood a mixture of red paint and resin.

This is South Africa's Wildlife Forensic Academy, a state-of-the-art training centre launched in May that hopes to bolster the global fight against wildlife crime by equipping environmental law enforcers with the skills they need to collect evidence and secure convictions in court.

In 2021, poachers killed 451 rhinos in South Africa, according to government statistics. However, only 38 cases made it to court, either because no suspect was identified, or because of a lack of usable evidence.

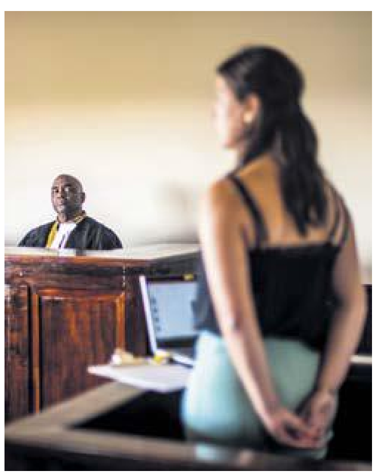
"Wildlife crimes tend to take place in remote areas, so there are no witness statements," says Andro Vos, a former programme director at the Netherlands Forensic Institute and co-founder and CEO of the Wildlife Forensic Academy. "So the forensic traces are often all you have to start a case."

The academy, which is located on a wildlife reserve an hour's drive north of Cape Town, hopes to educate and inspire its students using a series of realistic wildlife crime scenarios. Besides the stuffed rhino there is a giraffe, a lion, a plant-poaching setup, a poacher's house and truck and an inflatable boat of the type used by abalone poachers.

"People need to experience what it's like," says Vos, who started the academy to address what he sees as a lack of effective forensic training among wildlife crime law enforcement officers. "How are you going to inspire people just sitting in a classroom with a whiteboard? That's why we have all these realistic scenes. Attention to detail is what forensics is all about."

Petro Van Der Westhuizen, a former forensics expert with the South African police and a trainer at the academy, says: "Some of the rangers we've been training had absolutely no idea about forensics or how to handle a crime scene. If you want to identify suspects you have to start at the crime scene."

A group of visiting forensics students from universities in the UK and the Netherlands make their way methodically around the fake rhino crime scene. Wearing full hazmat suits and blue plastic gloves, they scour the undergrowth for traces left behind by poachers. Among the clues they find are a hunting knife, bullet casings, flecks of blood on a nearby shrub, cotton fibres snagged in a thorn tree and several sets of footprints.



▲ *A student is cross-examined during a mock trial at the academy*

"I've never done anything like this before," says Noa Van Handel, 22, a forensic science student from the Saxion University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. "We've had some really interesting lectures and the practical side has been great."

The academy aims to train its students in every step of the process, from the discovery of a crime scene to the conviction of the poacher. Among its facilities is a laboratory for the chemical analysis of evidence and a courtroom where students can get a feel for what it is like to present evidence at a trial and to undergo cross-examination.

"The first thing the defence will attack is the chain of custody and the processing of the evidence," says Phil Snijman, a former prosecutor and lecturer at the academy. "If you make a mistake by contaminating the crime scene or not processing evidence correctly, that can mean the end of your case."

The academy's courses range from one to four weeks and target local rangers and foreign students, with student fees subsidising the rangers' courses. Vos and his partner and co-founder, Greg Simpson, say they see the academy as a pilot project that they hope to replicate elsewhere.

Tourists back in Bethlehem after two years of pandemic restrictions

Bethan McKernan
Bethlehem

There is no room at the inn in Bethlehem once again as the Palestinian town gears up for its first Christmas season after two years of pandemic restrictions.

During Christmas week, 120,000 tourists and pilgrims are expected to visit the occupied West Bank town, home to the Byzantine Church of the Nativity on the spot where it is believed Jesus was born. The predicted numbers are almost on a par with 2019, when Bethlehem saw an all-time high of 150,000 visitors in the same period, and 3 million overall.

On a mild afternoon in mid-December, hundreds of local and international tourists stopped to look at a nativity scene and posed for selfies in front of the huge Christmas tree in Manger Square, next to the church.

Today the majority of Bethlehem's population is Muslim but the town is still home to a thriving Christian community and many Christian orders.

"I'm Muslim but I love Christmas. I've been coming to Bethlehem every year since I was a kid," said street seller Majed Hamdan, 21. "People are definitely back this year. The atmosphere is very different."

Tourism accounts for about 15% of the Palestinian Authority's GDP. Covid decimated the industry: hotels, restaurants, olive woodworking and souvenir shops lost an estimated $200m (£165m), with no financial help for businesses or workers.

"We are a family business, we have been here for 90 years. Business goes up and down with the political situation but we never had anything like the pandemic," said Nabil Giacaman, a third-generation woodworker and owner of an arts shop. "I am still worried because there's inflation and money problems everywhere, so even if tourists are coming they don't have as much to spend. Still … now is much better than before."

While the pandemic has eased, life has still been difficult: this year has been the bloodiest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Jerusalem and the West Bank for 17 years, with about 150 Palestinians and 30 Israelis killed. Fighting has largely been contained to the north of the occupied territory, but the Israeli army killed a teenager in a refugee camp near Bethlehem this month, leading to a daylong strike across the town in protest.

But amid the mosaics, candles and incense in the Church of the Nativity, no visitors seemed worried about violence. Tour guides working in several languages shepherded foreigners through the church's tiny entrance.

Dorothy Wise, a 70-year-old from the US, said: "I've always wanted to come pray under the star where Jesus was born and now I finally have the chance to."

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Business

Car firms urge UK to match US electric subsidy scheme

Jasper Jolly
Anna Isaac

Fears that a major US subsidy scheme will damage the UK automotive sector should be a "wake-up" for Britain to increase its own state support, according to a leading UK car boss.

British car industry leaders believe the UK could lose out on investment as businesses chase subsidies offered by the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Andy Palmer, the chair of battery company InoBat and a former chief executive of sports car maker Aston Martin Lagonda, said the IRA should be a "wake-up for the UK government that their incentives for investment have not been enough".

President Joe Biden signed the act in August, with big subsidies for technologies that will be crucial to the transition away from fossil fuels, including electric cars, batteries and renewable energy technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines. While the act is seen by many analysts as one of the most consequential pieces of climate legislation in history, many of the subsidies only apply to products made in the US.

The UK government has joined the EU in criticising the protectionist elements of the bill. Kemi Badenoch, the international trade secretary, has written to the Biden administration with concerns.

The subsidies would "harm multiple economies across the world and impact global supply chains in batteries, electric vehicles and wider renewables", Badenoch wrote in a letter to the US trade representative, Katherine Tai. She also said UK businesses should qualify for the subsidies, "as the closest of US allies". The letter was first reported by the Financial Times.

It is understood that Badenoch had already discussed concerns in private meetings during a trip last month to the US, where she met Tai and the commerce secretary, Gina Raimondo, as well as members of Congress.

Mike Hawes, the chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, a UK lobby group, said the industry was concerned because a fifth of its exports went to the US, its biggest customer other than the EU. Britain's biggest carmaker, Jaguar Land Rover, sold about 91,000 cars in North America in its last financial year, from a total of about 376,000.

Hawes said the tax credits on offer for US-made electric vehicles mean the US would probably be a "focus for those looking globally to invest". If the EU responded with its own subsidies for green technology manufacturing that could further dent the prospects for the UK industry.

"There's a danger that two big global markets may be favouring locally produced vehicles," he said.

Inobat has said it wants to build a gigafactory to produce electric car batteries in Europe, and that it is choosing between possible sites in the UK or EU. The scale of government support is likely to be an important factor in that decision.

Automotive companies have already acknowledged that the IRA could change investment decisions. Arrival, a startup trying to make electric vans, announced in October that it was abandoning a plan to start production in the UK in favour of a factory in the US, saying that the IRA tax credits were a major factor.

Arrival's decision came in the context of a funding crunch and a brutal 97% share price selloff over the past year that prompted the resignation of its founder as CEO. Nevertheless, the reference to the IRA reflects the concerns of other carmakers.

The UK government was approached for comment.

TikTok admits using its own app to spy on journalists

Reuters

TikTok has admitted it used its own app to spy on reporters as part of an attempt to track down their sources, according to an internal email.

The data was accessed by employees of ByteDance, TikTok's Chinese parent company and was used to track the reporters' physical movements. The company's chief internal auditor, Chris Lepitak, who led the team involved in the operation, has been sacked, while his China-based manager, Song Ye, has resigned.

They looked at IP addresses of journalists who were using the TikTok app in an attempt to learn if they were in the same location as employees suspected of leaking confidential information. The effort, which targeted the former BuzzFeed reporter Emily Baker-White and Cristina Criddle of the Financial Times among other reporters, was unsuccessful, but resulted in at least four staff members in the US and China improperly accessing the data, according to an email from ByteDance's general counsel, Erich Andersen.

All four have been fired. Company officials said they were taking additional steps to protect user data.

The ByteDance chief executive, Rubo Liang, the direct manager of Song Ye, said he was "deeply disappointed" in an internal email. "The public trust that we have spent huge efforts building is going to be significantly undermined by the misconduct of a few individuals … I believe this situation will serve as a lesson to us all."

▲ *The TikTok boss, Shou Zi Chew, said it had improved its protocols*
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER GOODNEY/ BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

ByteDance and TikTok had denied the allegations when they were first reported. The company claimed it "could not monitor US users in the way the article suggested", and added that TikTok had never been used to "target" any "members of the US government, activists, public figures or journalists". Those claims are now acknowledged to be false.

The disclosure, reported earlier by the New York Times, could add to pressure TikTok is facing in Washington from legislators and the Biden administration over security concerns about US user data.

Congress is due to pass legislation to ban government employees from downloading or using TikTok on their government-owned devices and more than a dozen governors have barred state employees from using TikTok on state-owned devices.

The Financial Times said in a statement that "spying on reporters, interfering with their work or intimidating their sources was completely unacceptable. We'll be investigating this story more fully before deciding our formal response."

Forbes reported on Thursday that ByteDance had tracked Forbes journalists including some who formerly worked at BuzzFeed "as part of a covert surveillance campaign" aimed at discovering the source of leaks.

The TikTok chief executive, Shou Zi Chew, said the company would "continue to enhance" its access protocols, "which have already been significantly improved and hardened since this initiative took place".

Price squeeze forces shoppers to cut back on food, drink and Christmas gifts

Phillip Inman

Millions of shoppers are expected to rein in their spending as they head into the last day of Christmas shopping, according to official data that shows eight in 10 adults plan to buy fewer presents.

Shoppers also plan to buy less expensive gifts to cope with a cost of living crisis in which rising prices are eating into the spending power of the average household at a record rate.

The Office for National Statistics said 79% of adults planned to cut back on the number of presents and 73% said the gifts they bought would be cheaper than last year.

Expensive foodie treats and eating out will get the cold shoulder in many households to save cash for basic items such as gas central heating.

Sixty-two per cent of respondents said they would buy less expensive food and drink, while 58% were going to turn their backs on takeaway or restaurant food. Cutting back on the amount of booze and food for Christmas was the priority for 56%.

The figures chime with high street footfall figures and a steady decline in online shopping that has forced many retailers to bring forward the traditional January sales.

Discounts are already widespread as poor weather and strikes add to the problems faced by the majority of households whose wages have fallen behind inflation.

The headline rate of consumer price inflation dropped slightly to 10.7% in November from 11.1% in the previous month, but remains well ahead of most pay deals, which average 4%, and the annual increase in total earnings, which averages 6%.

Ninety-two per cent of adults reported their cost of living had increased compared with a year ago when inflation was 5.4%, while 76% of respondents reported an increase in their cost of living compared with one month ago.

This week the shopper tracking agency Springboard said the number of visitors to UK high streets was down by a fifth on pre-pandemic levels last week, and almost 1% down on last year when the Omicron variant and some government restrictions led to a very quiet end of the year.

79%

Proportion of people who said they would buy fewer presents, while 73% said they would buy cheaper ones

Baby drivers

Starting small is paying off for car firm with big ideas

Jasper Jolly

Building cars is hard, so when Ben Hedley started his business he started small. To be precise, he started at 75% of the size. The Little Car Company does what its name suggests, producing shrunken but drivable battery electric toy versions of full-size classics from the likes of Aston Martin and Ferrari.

The company has made its way to £10m in turnover and 60 employees almost by accident over four years, Hedley said, walking around the company's workshop in Bicester Heritage, a converted Royal Air Force base in Oxfordshire that has been turned into a hub for classic car businesses. It made its first profits in the last financial quarter, despite the supply chain problems that have hit automotive manufacturers big and small.

The replicas start at €36,000 (£32,000), meaning they can only be playthings for the rich. But Hedley is not content with building small, expensive electric versions of big cars. The company is launching an ambitious, even quixotic, effort to do the opposite: build a full-scale, road-legal version of a remote-controlled toy car that was popular when was a child. By next summer he hopes to launch a stripped-back, electric off-road buggy for £15,000.

Hedley, who worked as a retail consultant before becoming a repeat entrepreneur, stumbled upon the idea for the Little Car Company. He was importing cheap mini replicas, but the French carmaker Bugatti asked if he could come up with something better for the Geneva motor show. He spotted a business opportunity when aficionados got in touch afterwards asking for one.

"We sold the concept and then we had to make the thing," he said. "We thought, 'Let's go as authentic as we can.'"

Hedley borrowed an original version of the car, an open-top Type 35 race car first built in 1924, and set about making it as close to the original as possible (but with a rule against fake exhausts).

Other cars followed: a Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa designed with the help of original blueprints, and an Aston Martin DB5 at two-thirds the scale of the car made famous by Sean Connery in the James Bond spy films. For the DB5 the company worked with Bond filmmakers to copy gadgets such as toy miniguns and smoke machines from No Time to Die.

The hefty price tag means the replicas will be out of reach for all but the richest, but on Bicester Heritage's track it becomes easier to see why wealthy car enthusiasts would consider forking out tens of thousands. With Hedley - a former speed skier for Great Britain - at the wheel the Aston Martin DB5 replica looks almost racy as he throws it round tight corners. Even with the Guardian's somewhat more restrained accelerator use it does not feel all that far from driving a convertible electric car (with your head sticking out of the sunroof).

That is where the idea for a full-size car comes in. "We started thinking, we've got this cool powertrain,'" said Hedley. "Jumping to build a city car was a bit too far. What if we took a small car and made it bigger?"

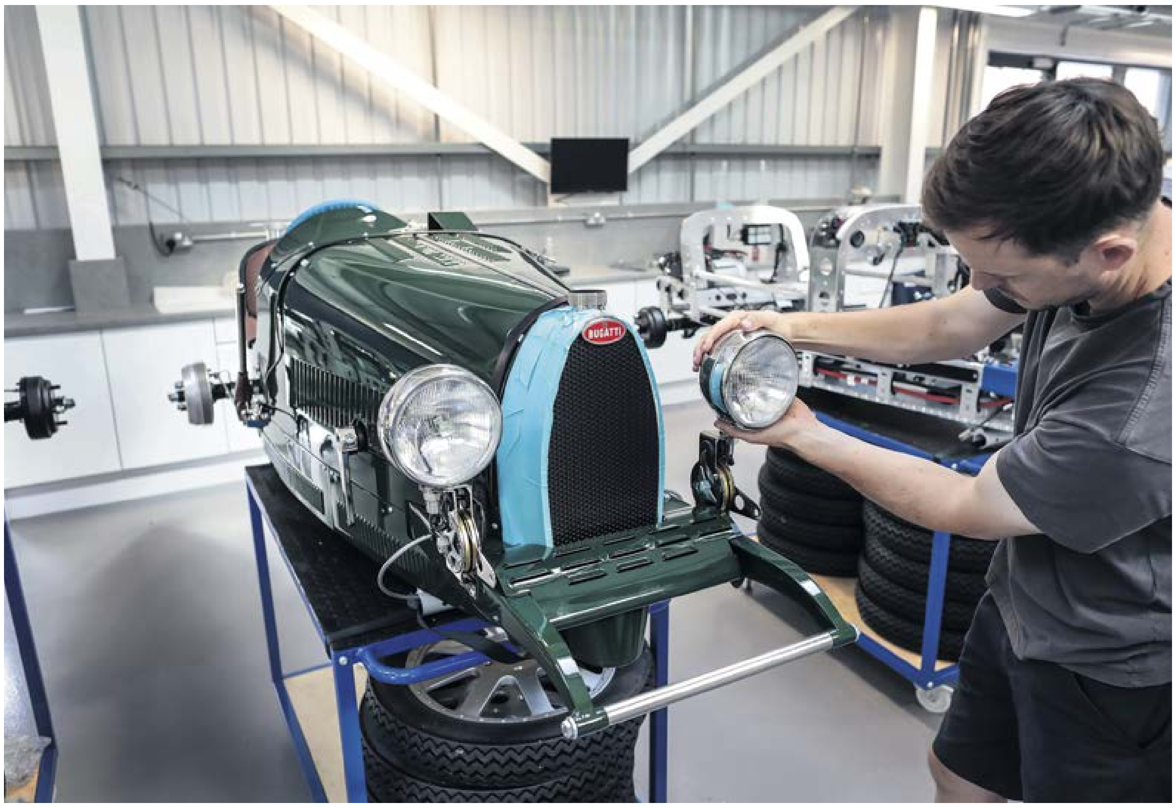
The model he chose was a Tamiya Wild One, a remote-controlled off-road toy released in 1985. The Little Car Co version will be 3.5m (11.5ft) long, 1.8m wide and weigh around 250kg - big enough to carry two people. The range should start at 30 miles - more than enough for the average commute.

A £15,000 price tag, if achieved, would put it within the range of current kit car buyers. The Little Car Co is never going to be a mass market carmaker, but if it does manage to run the gauntlet of making the Wild One Max legal on non-motorway roads, then the idea of people using them for urban transport does not seem inconceivable either (though probably in warmer climes, considering it will be fairly open to the elements). Cheap, small, electric runarounds such as the electric G-Wiz or Citroën's newer cuboid Ami will be increasingly attractive as prices drop.

Making the Wild One Max has been a lesson in just how many excrescences modern cars are built with, Hedley said. Air conditioning, giant touch screens and electric seat adjusters add weight, hence extra carbon emissions, and cost.

Starting his company in a pandemic and with a recession looming was "a little bit of a challenging exercise". "Everything that could have gone wrong did go wrong." But he is undeterred, and is trying to raise £10m in the company's fourth investment round to get more space. He eventually wants to build "thousands" of cars a year.

"We want to show electric cars can be fun and they don't have to be 1,000 horsepower and 2.5 tonnes."



▼ A test run for the Bugatti Baby on the Bicester Heritage track. Below, work on one of the cars
PHOTOGRAPHS: MARTIN GODWIN/THE GUARDIAN

▼ Ben Hedley talks about the Bugatti. The car was originally made for the Geneva motor show. Enthusiasts got in touch wanting their own

Ellison pleads guilty to seven charges relating to FTX collapse

Alex Hern

Caroline Ellison, the former chief executive of Alameda Research - a sister company of the collapsed cryptocurrency exchange FTX - has agreed to plead guilty to seven offences, including wire fraud, securities fraud and money laundering, according to a newly unsealed agreement with US prosecutors.

The combined maximum sentence for the offences is 110 years, but Ellison's cooperation with the investigation means that she is likely to receive a substantially reduced punishment.

Alongside the unsealed plea deal, the US financial derivatives regulator, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), has filed an amended complaint detailing its case against Ellison and Gary Wang, a co-founder of Alameda and FTX, incorporating their conduct alongside the charges previously filed against Sam Bankman-Fried, the founder of the FTX group.

The CFTC's amended complaint charges Ellison with fraud and material misrepresentations in connection with the sale of digital asset commodities in interstate commerce, and charges Wang with fraud in connection with the sale of digital asset commodities in interstate commerce.

The commission alleges that Wang specifically wrote features in the code underlying FTX to allow Alameda to maintain an "essentially unlimited line of credit" on the platform.

It also alleges that Ellison directed Alameda to use "billions of dollars of FTX funds, including FTX customer funds, to trade on other digital asset exchanges and to fund a variety of high-risk digital asset industry investments". Even as she gambled Alameda customer money - received through both the unlimited line of credit and other loans between FTX and Alameda - she insisted in public that the two companies were separate, the CFTC claims.

"With today's charges we continue to move aggressively to hold all individuals who commit fraud accountable and protect customers from additional harm and losses. In the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework over digital assets, the CFTC will use all of its existing power and authority to protect all market participants, while ensuring the integrity of commodity markets," said the commission's chair, Rostin Behnam.

In contrast to Bankman-Fried, who was released on bail of $250m (£208m) and ordered to be confined to his parents' house in California, Ellison's bail was set at $250,000.

She will not be allowed to leave the continental US. The plea deal protects her from further criminal charges, with the exception of potential tax violations, but does not cover any potential civil prosecution from other agencies.

$250,000

Amount of bail set for Ellison, in contrast to Sam Bankman-Fried, who is on bail of $250m

▼ The NFL's $14bn deal will cheer Premier League bosses hoping to reignite a bidding war for UK rights
PHOTOGRAPH: FREDERIC J BROWN/AFP/GETTY

Playing to win

YouTube's NFL deal turns up heat over sports rights

Mark Sweney

YouTube's $14bn (£11.5bn) deal to stream National Football League (NFL) games marks the latest incursion by a Silicon Valley giant into territory traditionally dominated by broadcasters and pay-TV companies, as live sport becomes the latest battleground for audiences and profits promised by the streaming revolution.

The Google-owned business's seven-year deal - which will see the world's largest video platform take over the "Sunday ticket" package of games held by the US satellite service DirecTV since 1994 - followed an auction that included heavy interest from fellow big tech company Apple.

The deal is the latest in a series of commercially eye-popping deals by the NFL, the most expensive live sports rights in the world, following its $113bn, 11-year agreements struck with broadcast partners last year that saw Amazon snap up $1bn worth of games annually.

YouTube's attitude will cheer Premier League bosses hoping a new big spender will reignite the lucrative bidding wars for UK rights that marked the last decade.

The Premier League almost doubled the value of the US rights in a £2bn deal last year with NBC, which is mostly airing matches on its streaming service, Peacock. But bosses rolled over a deal with existing partners in the UK to avoid losing potentially hundreds of millions of pounds in an auction lacking fresh competition. Beyond Sky and BT, the only new player to buy Premier League rights in the UK in recent years has been Amazon, although it has not looked to make a knockout bid.

While YouTube TV and the recently launched YouTube Primetime Channels are US-focused, the prospect of $1.2tn parent Google going for international sports deals now looms large.

"The threat of Google's free capital entering the rights market is clearly good news for rights sellers worldwide including the Premier League," says Peter Hutton, the former head of sport at Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp.

While the global streaming wars have mostly focused on the hundreds of billions being spent on TV series and films, traditional TV companies - from Sky and ITV to Comcast, Disney and Paramount in the US - have been facing rising competition for sports rights.

Pay-TV and cable companies continue to have to cope with budget cuts as subscriber numbers decline. Earlier this year, Comcast wrote $8.6bn off the value of Sky, less than four years after triumphing in a £30bn bidding war for the European pay-TV empire.

Roger Goodell, the NFL commissioner, played on the organisation's move to embrace younger viewers who are leading the move towards streaming, describing the YouTube deal as part of a "new era ... building the next generation of NFL fans".

> *'The deal is an aggressive move to continue to take market share from cable TV operators'*
>
> **Peter Hutton**
> *Media executive*

Meanwhile, deep-pocketed big tech companies such as Facebook and YouTube are diversifying their business models after reporting their first ever declines in advertising income. "This [deal] is an aggressive move to continue to take more market share from the cable TV operators," says Hutton.

Earlier this year, Apple agreed a deal worth $2.5bn over 10 years to broadcast US Major League soccer matches, following an earlier deal with Major League baseball for Friday games. Meta has held sports rights in a number of international markets and has previously bid for the hugely popular Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket rights in India.

Amazon continues to invest in an array of rights including tennis, rugby and Champions League football in countries including the UK, Germany and Italy.

Even Netflix, which has publicly ruled out bidding for live sport, was revealed in November to have looked at rights including the ATP tennis tour, cycling and Women's Tennis Association as well as looking to buy the World Surf League.

While this year saw the global streaming boom come to an abrupt end, Amazon, Disney and Netflix have seen the viewer loyalty that sport-themed content can provide.

"YouTube's deal recognises the unique ability of sport to bring a body of fans with it to any service, regardless of delivery technology," says Hutton. "We've seen Warner Bros Discovery invest directly in the Professional Triathletes Organisation (PTO) this week. I think we'll see more of broadcasters and streamers building equity positions in the sports industry where they can."

More than 30 pubs a month forced to close doors for good over past year

PA Media

More than 32 pubs closed in England and Wales each month in 2022 as rocketing energy bills and staffing pressures forced businesses to shut for the final time.

Analysis of official government data by the property adviser Altus Group found the total number of pubs in England and Wales, including those vacant and being offered to let, fell to 39,787 in December, compared with 40,173 at the same point last year.

Nevertheless, the number of pubs shutting their doors for good was 13.1% lower than in 2021, reflecting a more resilient year for UK pubgoers despite the turbulent economic backdrop. The latest figures showed that 50 pubs were closed down in Wales over the year.

Pubs have been grappling with soaring energy costs, rising food prices and weakened consumer demand throughout the year and predict further challenges in 2023.

The British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) said earlier this month that venues have already reduced their hours or menus to address these concerns, amid fears many pubs could be forced to shut without further support, particularly in regard to energy bills.

The data highlights the number of pubs that have disappeared from communities, through being either demolished or converted for other uses, such as homes or offices.

A total of 2,663 pubs have disappeared from cities, towns and villages in England and Wales over the past five years.

Ben Nelson, Altus Group vice-president, said: "Many publicans that I speak to are worried that this could be their last Christmas and really needed certainty about future support.

"High operating costs and low margins make plots attractive for alternative investment and use, so continued support is vital to protect pubs as they play an important role at the heart of their local communities."

Hospitality businesses were among those to receive support through the government's energy bills relief scheme. However, the scheme ends in March.

The sector is fraught with uncertainty over further support, with the government confirming that it will announce further plans to help businesses with their energy bills in the new year.

2,663

Total number of pubs in England and Wales that called last orders for the final time in the past five years

Money

Boxing Day sales

The top tips and tricks for getting the best deals

Many retailers are expected to offer larger than normal discounts this year. **Jess Clark** offers advice on how best to bag a bargain

Retail experts are predicting "big discounts for savvy consumers" in the Boxing Day sales as stores slash the price of unsold winter clothing, homewares and gadgets after the cost of living crisis, strikes and snow marred the all-important Christmas trading period for the high street.

In recent years the big discounts available on Black Friday and Cyber Monday have stolen Boxing Day's thunder. However, after holding off discounting in December, when Christmas shopping should have been in full swing, the transport and postal strikes disrupted visits to the high street as well as online shopping.

The disruption means many retailers will have been left with excess stock at the end of the year, says PwC's retail director Kien Tan. "As a result, retailers are expected to reward patient shoppers with larger than normal discounts as they clear seasonal stock in the Boxing Day sales, ahead of what may prove to be a challenging 2023."

So if you are hoping to grab a bargain, we have some top tips for successful sales shopping - but don't forget what the personal finance guru Martin Lewis has to say: "If you were going to buy it anyway, and it's half-price, great, you've saved 50%. If you weren't going to buy it but do it only because it's half-price, you've wasted 100%."

Do your research

You can avoid wasting money in the Boxing Day sales by planning ahead and bypassing impulse buys. If you have been coveting a particular item, check how much it costs at various retailers now, so you can tell whether you are making a real saving if and when it pops up in the sales.

A product must have been on sale at a higher price for at least 28 days in order for a retailer to mark it as a discount. "There are strict rules that retailers need to stick to when advertising reductions in a sale," says the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman, a government-approved voluntary scheme for the retail sector.

"This is to ensure you can be confident the reduction is a genuine one. You would not be entitled to the difference if items are further reduced after you have made your purchase, so make sure you are happy with the current price that you are committing to pay and don't feel under pressure by messages such as 'only two left' or 'three other customers are looking at this item.'"

Reading consumer and expert reviews before buying in the sale can help you make a smart decision, particularly when it comes to tech products. Also look at your finances beforehand and set a budget for your sale shopping.

Reena Sewraz, the retail editor at the consumer group Which?, says: "Draw up a wishlist of what you want beforehand to avoid impulse buys that you might later regret. Shop around online to gauge prices, so you can spot a bargain from an exaggerated discount. Some retailers promise to match prices if you see an item cheaper elsewhere."

Get online …

These days retailers often start their sales before Christmas, and after a tough few weeks many chains had already fired the starting gun by Christmas Eve, often having offered early access to customers who signed up for newsletters.

For example, the high street stores & Other Stories, Jigsaw and Cos had offered newsletter subscribers early access to sales by 15 December, and H&M's sale launched early online, too. Remember to check your emails for any additional savings that may be available, such as codes for extra discounts or free delivery.

… but think before you click

Shopping online in a sale can leave you more vulnerable to fraud as

Value is always in fashion

How to get the best out of clothes shopping

It can be easy to get carried away in the Boxing Day sales, particularly when there are big discounts on offer everywhere you look. If you plan to use this year's sales to update your wardrobe, there are some things to consider before hitting the shops.

In the UK the average person owns 115 items of clothing, 30% of which have not been worn within the past year. So, before buying anything new, go through the clothes you already own and consider what purchases would give them a new lease of life.

Experts say successful sales shopping is about writing a list of what you need and hunting those things down without getting sidetracked. The journalist Lucy Siegle suggests only buying garments you can see yourself wearing 100 times, so recite this to yourself if you are drawn to something fabulous that you know deep down you won't get much wear out of.

With £140m worth of clothing ending up in landfill each year, if you have a specific item in mind, why not see if you can pick it up cheaper secondhand. There is eBay, Vinted and Depop for high street clothes and Vestiaire Collective and the RealReal for designer. Many charity shops also have online portals.

Another thing to consider is the type of fabric clothes are made of. The 100 times rule probably discounts the mega-cheap clothes found at the value end of the market but you are likely to keep a dress for longer if it's not made of clingy polyester. Look out for natural fibres, such as organic cotton and wood-based fabrics - Tencel and EcoVero, for instance.

▲ *The average Briton owns 115 items of clothing; many often go unworn*

Whatever you do, don't buy something just because it is on sale. Only head to the tills if you are certain the style is right for you, and, most important of all in these difficult times, if you are certain you can afford it.

Better to be boring and look for safe investment purchases, such as a woollen winter coat, boots or accessories you will use year in, year out. Think quality not quantity. Be strict. Only buy a piece of clothing if it fits in the changing room as opposed to after the diet you plan to go on in January. If you are shopping online, create a wishlist on the website of your favourite retailer during the downtime you have over Christmas and then check back when discounts go live.

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scammers try to take advantage of bargain hunters.

Only use trusted websites for online shopping. If you are using a site for the first time it is worth checking whether it has good reviews on Trustpilot or other shoppers have flagged it as potentially being a scam.

Never directly transfer money to a seller, and remember that if a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. If you fall victim to a scam, tell your bank as soon as possible and report it to Action Fraud.

Start early

Shops and websites are predicted to be busy on Boxing Day, with 20.8 million people set to buy something, according to VoucherCodes' Shopping for Christmas 2022 report.

Although not as big a number as in previous years, about 13.1 million people are expected to head to high streets and shopping centres, with £2.3bn set to be spent in stores in only one day. A further £1.3bn is predicted to be spent online on 26 December as 7.8 million people shop from home.

▲ *Boxing Day savings are worth waiting for, but it's best to do your research before you hit the shops* PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY RAIN/EPA

Although the overall spend is expected to add up to £3.6bn, that is almost 10% down on last year, as higher food and fuel bills forced Britons to use their budgets to pay for Christmas itself.

"The Boxing Day sales have long been known as a great time to bag yourself a post-Christmas bargain," says Anita Naik, a savings expert at VoucherCodes. "However, with the cost of living crisis putting significant pressure on people's finances, it's no surprise that this year fewer of us will be heading out to the sales.

"If you are planning to browse the sales after Christmas, make sure you're being savvy with your money. Compare prices at different retailers to ensure you're getting the biggest discount possible, and make sure to always check for discount codes."

Also, if you plan to visit stores, bear in mind that the best discounts will probably be available earlier in the day.

Sewraz adds: "If you're hitting the shops, the best deals are likely to be snapped up quickly, so it could pay to make an early start. But beware of getting caught up in the hype. Consider whether the discounted price offers a genuine saving."

Bargain hunters are expected to spend a total of £13.8bn between Christmas Day and New Year's Eve, according to the VoucherCodes report but again the overall number is down on last year because of the financial pressure created by the cost of living crisis.

While hitting the shops early in the sales period usually produces the best results, Deann Evans, the director of partnerships and expansion at the e-commerce platform Shopify, predicts online sales will stretch further into January than usual – so it might be worth holding your nerve to see if the price drops further.

"This year almost half of UK consumers are putting more money aside for the holiday season than they have done previously," Evans says. "We may therefore see sales subvert the traditional Boxing Day period, both creeping in earlier and extending deeper into January."

Check your refund rights

Return and refund rules are often different for items bought in a sale, so make sure you know your rights before buying.

Retailers have to offer a refund if the item is faulty, not as described or does not do what it is supposed to do. This applies to sale items and full-price products, whether bought in-store or online.

Shoppers who made a buy online have 14 days to let the retailer know they want a refund, and another 14 days to send the item back. They do not have to provide a reason for the return.

Some shops will change their refund and returns policies during the sales period, either shortening the length of time you have to take an item back or only offering store credit rather than a cash refund.

Retailers do not have to offer refunds for some products, including personalised or customised ones, perishable items – for example, food or flowers – and CDs, DVDs or games that have been unwrapped. You may only get your money back on these items if the product is faulty.

20.8m

Number of people set to buy something on Boxing Day, according to a VoucherCodes report

£3.6bn

Britons' forecast overall spend on Boxing Day – almost 10% down on last year amid the cost of living crisis

▲ *Owners of the older-style stamps can exchange them for new ones by using Royal Mail's stamp swap out scheme* PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS

Royal Mail deadline

Buyers told to use or swap non-barcoded stamps

The deadline is 31 January, although there will then be six-month grace period with such post still delivered. **Rupert Jones** reports

Do you have a book of stamps in your wallet, purse or drawer at home? Maybe you have stockpiled them to avoid future price rises.

If so, you need to be aware that the official deadline for using up stamps without barcodes – notably the regular first and second-class "everyday" stamps with the profile of the late Queen – is getting closer.

After 31 January 2023, regular stamps without a barcode will no longer technically be valid for postage. So Royal Mail is encouraging people to use them up before then, or swap them for the new barcoded ones.

However, the good news is that after that date, for the first six months, mail posted with the "retired" stamps will be delivered as normal. "After this six-month grace period, an item with a non-barcoded stamp would be treated as if there is insufficient postage. Any item that has insufficient postage is subject to a surcharge," Royal Mail says.

Unfortunately, you can't just take your old ones to the nearest post office and swap them for new ones. You need to fill in a form and send them back to Royal Mail.

However, there is positive news for those people who bought a stack of Christmas stamps for their cards this year and still have some left – or maybe even have a lot left over from last year. Non-barcoded Christmas stamps will remain valid, so they can continue to be used after the deadline.

Royal Mail introduced barcodes to its stamps in February as part of what the company described as an extensive modernisation drive. If you have bought some recently you will have noticed they now have a barcode.

It says this new addition "will enable exciting new services by connecting physical stamps to the digital world". They can be scanned by customers using Royal Mail's app, enabling people to do things such as watch a video.

In the meantime, people with "old" stamps should probably dig them out and try to use them. The ones that are affected by this are the standard "definitive" first- and second-class stamps featuring the profile of the late Queen on a plain-coloured background, and those that show any other value and which are often used for parcels (1p, £1 and so on).

Your stamps can be exchanged for new ones through the stamp swap out scheme. This involves filling in a form and sending them off. You can print off the form, ask for one to be posted to you or pick one up from a post office.

When filling in the form and adding up the value of your stamps, the amount you write in the box is the value at the time you are filling in the form – that is, current Royal Mail prices. What you actually paid for the stamps when you bought them is not relevant, it says.

However, Royal Mail issued this plea: "Please do not try to exchange your stamps at your post office branch, as they will not be able to do this. You can only do this directly with Royal Mail."

Head of Commercial and Operations

£50,534 - £52,677
City Hall
Ref: VAC003603

You'll ensure commercial income potential is maximised and that a commercial mindset is embedded in the service. You will focus on building the CC&I's retail, catering, events and other business functions to strengthen and diversify our funding streams. In particular, you'll ensure we maximise self-generated income through developing first-class cafés, shops, e-commerce, conferencing and room hire facilities and city events. Ensuring a high-quality environment and visitor experience will be vital and we'll look to you to lead the front-of-house teams to ensure excellent customer service is offered to every visitor.

Head of Collections and Archives

£50,534 - £52,677
City Hall
Ref: VAC003606

This is an opportunity to bring about real change in the way civic collections are cared for and used to engage both communities and visitors in understanding Bristol's history and future. Bristol Museums have been awarded Arts Council England NPO funding for the next three years, and key challenge will be to embed a new structure to support public programmes while simultaneously establishing a clear curatorial vision for each museum and delivering a phased programme of gallery redisplay projects.

Head of Public Programmes and Learning

£50,534 - £52,677
City Hall
Ref: VAC003605

This is an opportunity to bring about real change in how audiences engage with Bristol's culture and heritage. Responsible to the Head of C&CI and working within the terms of our Arts Council England NPO funding, you will produce a creative and thought-provoking public programme that realises the potential of our amazing collections and the stories they tell. Your programme will also highlight inventions, innovations and industry across the city and its world-class universities. We'll look to you to drive footfall, both physically and digitally, and extend the reach, impact, reputation and revenue of the organisation.

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ILLUSTRATION BY JAMIE WIGNALL

Ofgem rules make it clear that energy suppliers should offer support to customers in danger of being cut off

Money hacks

How you can get help with your energy bills

Sandra Haurant

Government help

Every household in England, Scotland and Wales is eligible for the energy bills support scheme, which is part of the government's cost of living package. It is worth £400 in total, with the discount applied to your household electricity bill in six instalments over the winter months. If you have not received the discount, contact your energy supplier.

There have been reports of people missing out, such as when they have a traditional prepayment meter. In theory, they should get a voucher code by text, email or post, or receive automatic credits when topping up, while those on smart prepayment meters should get the top-up automatically.

Colder weather

The warm home discount is worth £150 and is applied as a one-off discount to your electricity bill rather than cash paid into your bank account. But be aware that changes were made to the fuel poverty scheme, which is available in England, Scotland and Wales, this year and some groups are no longer able to claim.

If you can't afford to pay, contact your energy company as early as possible. If you're eligible you should have received a letter by the end of January and the discount should be applied automatically to your bill. You can use the online form on the Gov.uk website to see if you are eligible. In Wales, people on certain benefits can apply through their local authority for the Wales fuel support scheme, worth a one-off payment of £200.

People who receive a range of benefits, including pension credit, income support, and support with mortgage interest, may also be eligible for cold weather payments. Under this scheme, the government will make a payment of £25 to those eligible for each period of seven days, between 1 November and 31 March, in which the temperature drops to below 0C (or is forecast to do so). The payments depend on local weather – so in the postcodes NE27 and M15, for example, the weather has already been cold enough for enough days to trigger two payments.

Older people

The winter fuel payment is worth between £250 and £600 towards heating bills (including a cost of living payment) for people born before 26 September 1956. Again, it should arrive automatically but if you haven't received it, and think you should have, call the helpline on 0800 731 0160.

Household support fund

The government's household support fund has grown by another £500m, and been extended until March 2023. "The fund helps households most in need to pay for essentials such as food and utilities," says Sue Anderson of the debt charity StepChange. Councils run their own funds and set their own eligibility criteria. Help is typically aimed at households where there is a child, a person with disabilities or someone over retirement age.

Each council has a different approach – some ask for applications, some do not accept requests and instead are contacting eligible households directly. In some cases, though, applications are closed until January, or even "until further notice", because of the high demand for help.

Prepayment meters

According to Citizens Advice, about 4 million households will be using prepayment meters in the UK this winter, and could be paying on average £258 more than direct debit customers.

Even so, Ofgem says prepayment meters can be suitable for "those who are budgeting or are on lower incomes" as well as people who use them for "bill management for those who do not have a bank account or prefer cash, and energy management for select groups in rented properties like student accommodation".

They can be used as an "enforcement solution" for people who "refuse to pay their bills" but energy suppliers also move people over to prepayment meters if they have outstanding debts on their bill payments – even when they are willing, but unable, to pay.

Nonetheless, Citizens Advice says: "We continue to advise high numbers of people every month who are having energy prepayment meters forcibly installed because they are unable to pay for their ongoing energy usage. This is particularly concerning, as we are also seeing more people who can't afford to top up their energy prepayment meter – effectively disconnecting themselves."

In the year leading to November, Citizens Advice saw more people unable to afford to top up their prepayment meter than in the previous six years combined. It says: "If you run out of gas or electricity because you can't top up your meter, this is called self-disconnecting. Tell your supplier that you'd have to self-disconnect if you had a prepayment meter."

Energy customers can refuse to move to prepayment meters in some situations – for example, if they wouldn't be able to get to the meter or if they would be unable to top it up.

Ofgem rules make it clear that energy suppliers should offer emergency support to customers who find themselves in danger of being cut off, which includes when the meter runs low or runs out, if top-up points are closed, for example on weekends and public holidays, and if you can't leave your house because of illness.

£150

Value of the warm home discount – it is applied as a one-off discount to your electricity bill

£250

Minimum value of the winter fuel payment for people born before 26 September 1956

Contact your supplier

"Even with the government support, many will be struggling to pay their energy bills, which have risen sharply this year, particularly as the colder weather takes hold," Anderson says. "If you can't afford to pay, contact your energy company as early as possible and ask them if you can pay at a rate you can afford. You can also ask for details of grants or hardship funds they have available."

Get help with getting help

For older people struggling with bills, Age UK can provide support with debt and energy issues such as prepayment meters.

If you are unable to pay, the debt charities StepChange, National Debtline, Christians Against Poverty and PayPlan can offer help.

◀ **Trowbridge, Wiltshire**
£1.5m
The Victorians started the inside-outside property trend with the orangery, a greenhouse-cum-garden room that can be enjoyed whatever the weather. This Grade II*-listed home was built in 1859 for the clothier William Roger Brown, an important figure in Trowbridge. The four-bedroom semi-detached house comes with an orangery that connects the building to the grounds. There was once a lily pond in its centre but the Italian lava stone cove with a sea effect still exists. The gardens are visited by kingfishers, sparrowhawks and owls. *Peter Greatorex, 01225 904 9999*

Fantasy house hunt Homes with garden rooms

Compiled by Anna White

▶ **Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands**
£2m
On the edge of the 970-hectare (2,400-acre) Sutton Park is a grand Edwardian house with six bedrooms, four bathrooms, a home office, a games room and a cellar. At its heart is the open-plan kitchen, which has a walk-in pantry. Despite it being a busy family home, there is a quiet spot to be found in the winter garden at the back looking over the lawn. With a terracotta tiled floor, timber-framed ceilings and a wall of leaded windows, this linear bolt-on room sits between the garden and the house. *Fine & Country, 0121 272 6900*

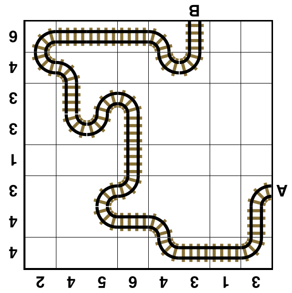
▲ **Fen End, West Midlands**
£800,000
Some parts of this five-bedroom cottage date back 200 years, although the timber and glass conservatory is clearly a more recent addition. The garden room is an extension of the kitchen; a tiled floor runs through both spaces. It doubles up as a breakfast room and looks on to a pretty garden and across the fields beyond. *Mr and Mrs Clarke, 07880 731 580*

▼ **Croydon, London**
One-bed from £358,000
For developers in London, a winter garden - a balcony totally enclosed in glass - is a way of selling an apartment high up in a tower with no outside space. At the 20-storey London Square development, all apartments have Crittall-style glazed doors from the living space and kitchen into a winter garden. The building also has a communal roof terrace. *London Square, 0333 666 0105*

◀ **Gipsy Hill, London**
£885,000
The owners of this 1960s three-bedroom, single-storey house have created their own all-weather garden by thinking outside the concrete box. The pale-grey brick property is wrapped around two internal courtyards with one at the centre letting light into the living areas. It is a planted and sociable space with a crab apple tree and a fabric canopy roof stretched across the top to keep the rain off. The natural light through the sliding doors bounces off the white terrazzo floor in the main living space. *The Modern House, 020 3795 5920*

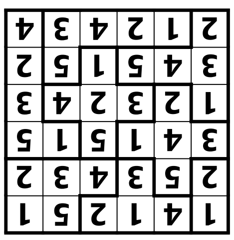
Puzzles

Solutions

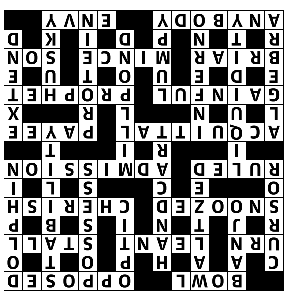


Train tracks

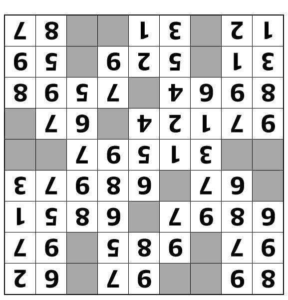
Word wheel
REWRITTEN



Suguru



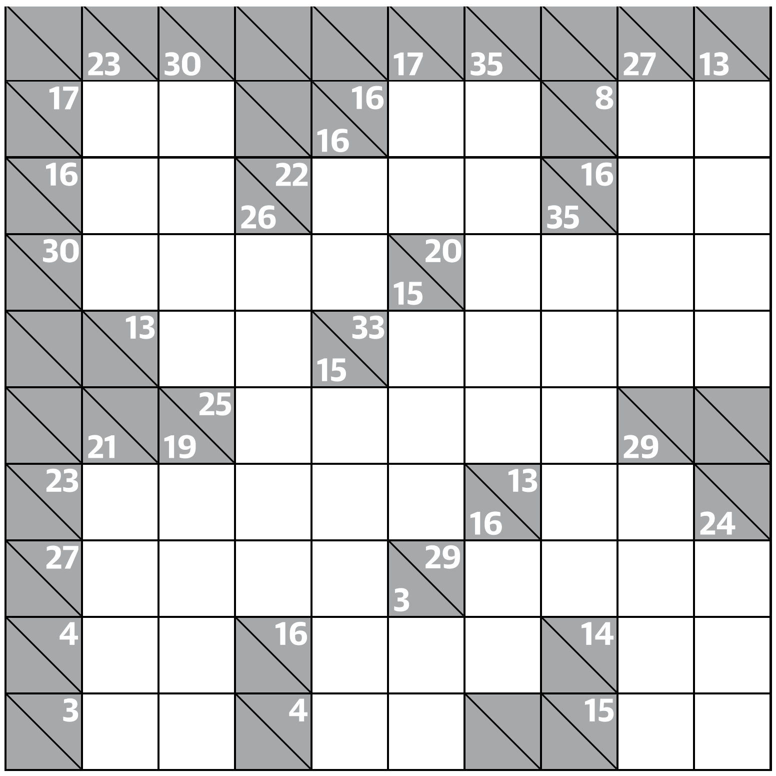
Codeword



Kakuro

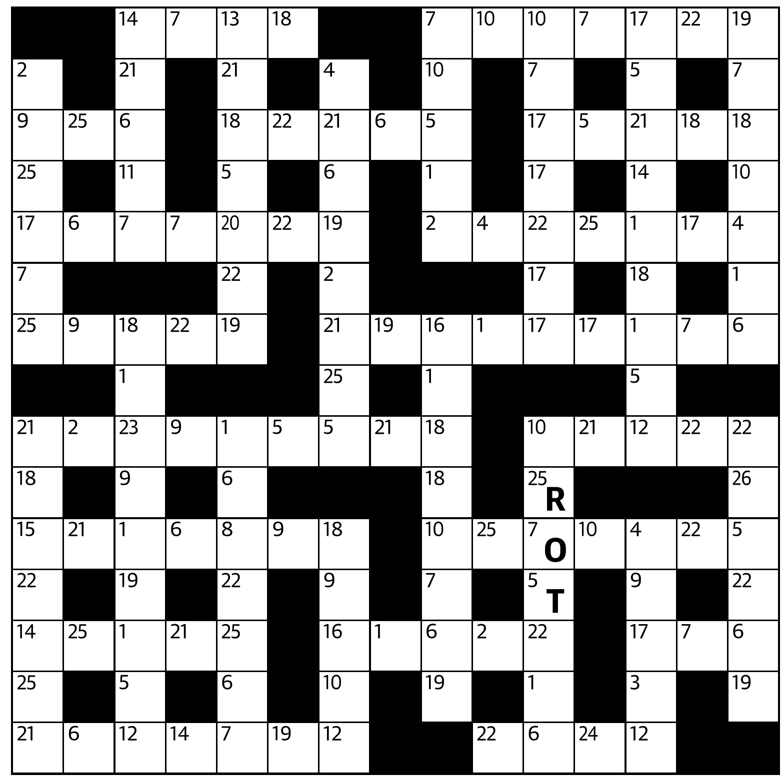
Kakuro

Fill the grid so that each block adds up to the total in the box above or to the left of it. You can only use the digits 1-9 and you must not use the same number twice in a block.



Codeword

Crack the code to fill in the crossword grid. Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. A number of letters have been decoded to help with the identification of other letters and words in the grid.

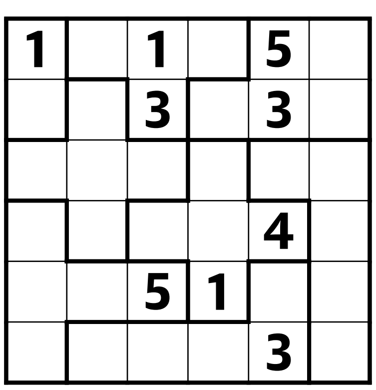


A B C D E F G H I J K L M N ~~O~~ P Q ~~R~~ S ~~T~~ U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				T		O						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
											R	

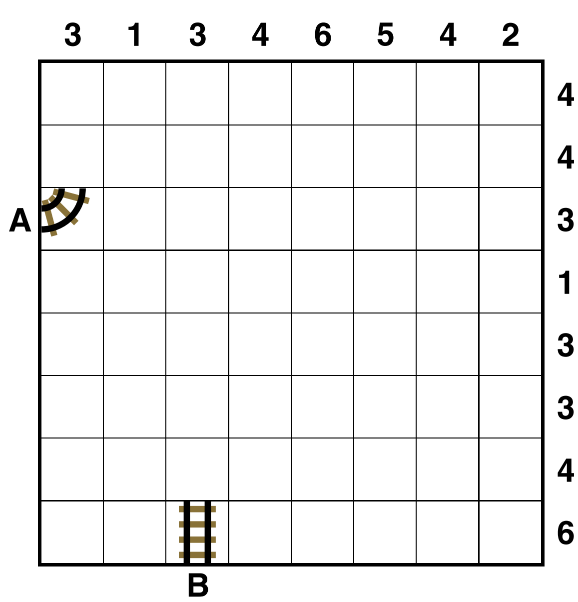
Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.



Train tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each row and column. There are only straight rails and curved rails. The track cannot cross itself.



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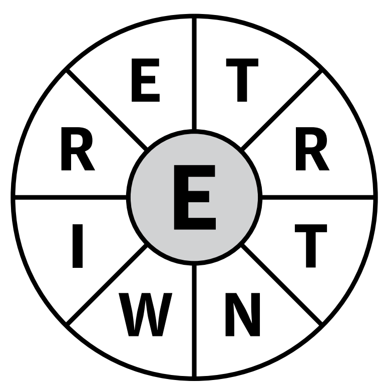
Word wheel

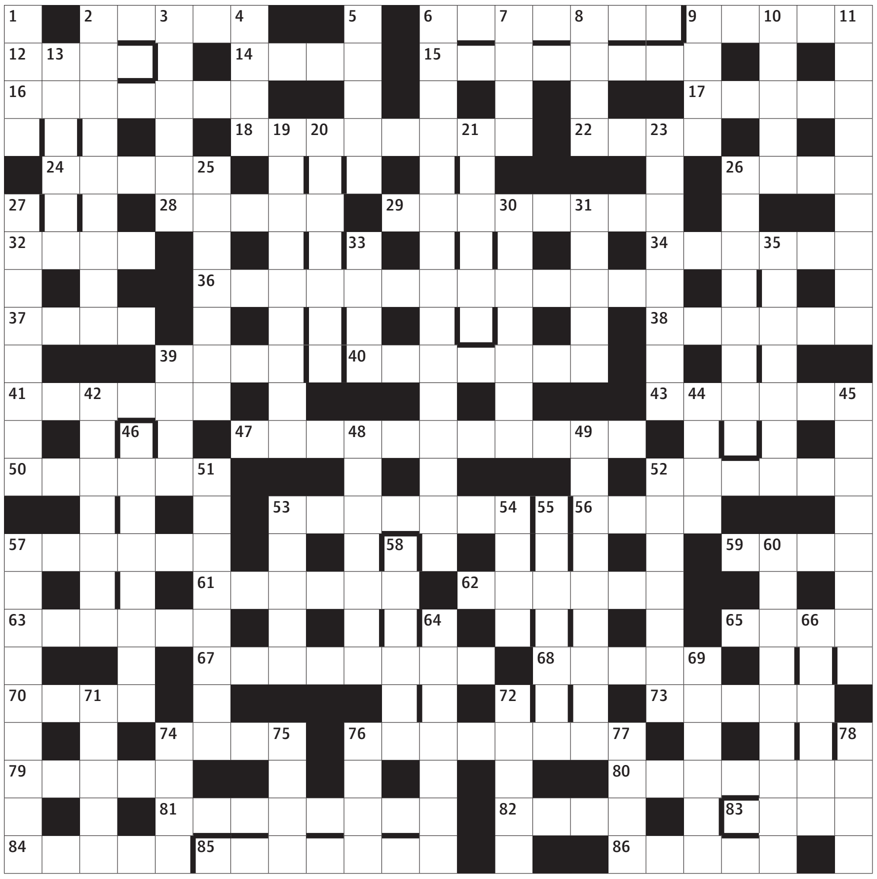
Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. Target: excellent 49; good 41; average 30.



Puzzles

Guardian Christmas cryptic crossword

No 28,949 set by Maskarade



The GUARDIAN (52across) SETTERS' (3, 41, 44) PARTY (40, two words) is in full swing. The TREE (61,62) with ANGEL (6down, two words) on top is decorated with BELLS (5, 10, 38) and TINSEL in strands (24s, 50).

The BIRD (36, two words) is served with mashed POTATOES (1 and 22), GREENs (48, 59, 74across, 79) and SAUSAGES (19, 49, 80), accompanied by DRINKS (39across, 57down, two words). After the PUDDINGs (60, 75) come three items before CRACKERS (7, 72, 76down) and CHEESE (8, 27), followed by a CAROL (81) about a PARTRIDGE (47, two words) in a felled PEAR TREE (76across). CARDS (9across's, 43) are opened before FATHER (54) CHRISTMAS (14) - or (2across 68) - arrives with PRESENTs (34, 56) for both the GIRLS (15, 45) - but not for the BOYS (14, 16)! And, finally, GAMES (2down, two words, 17, 69, 71) finish off the celebrations.

None of the solutions indicated above is further defined.

Across

6 What one of the dukes may possess (7)
12 Back story, we hear (4)
18 In temper, retiring detectives stand down (8)
26 Dean captures chorister's heart (4)
28 Finally drawing diagrams regularly for lively dances (5)
29 Gets into anonymous volume with chain letters (8)
32 Fast one hardly observed at Xmas, first of all (4)
37 Frame airline before start of hijack (4)
53 Show aggression to another driver — take a knife to him? (5,2)
57 Two short blokes dance (3-3)
63 Turns out with Chris and Steffi to begin with (6)
65 Guardsman regularly disclosed the Bear (4)
67 Last bit of work left on new stores in Alpine resort (8)
70 Ways of escape from the stables? (4)
73 Cash prize with strings attached? (5)
82 Stand up in shower (4)
83 Yank taking out Chinese bird (4)
84,78 Cut of meat from China to be cooked (9)
85 Ancient copper takes measures in court (7)
86 A shade uneasy at first, appearing in video (5)

Down

4 Large number of miles away from historical fiction novelist, Ms Seton (4)
9 Healthy Mancunian suburb (4)
11 Wrote rubbish about Spanish car and tandem (3-6)
13 Top child with love for sport (6)
20 Infection affected side like England (7)
21 Centres of multiple glaciers turning up on canton (6)
23 Fancies dodgy Pole (8)
25 Heard giant is secure (7)
26 Emperor's supporter with paper beard (8)
30 Having lost identity, Coleridge confused artist (2,5)
31 Photos of marksmen (5)
33 Up to no good, after end of shift (4)
35 Gemstone — red one out of place in container (7)
39 County borders (4)
42 Cricket side go off holidaying (2,5)
46 Tear trousers pulling these when parachuting? (8)
51 Rank site transformed in former homeland (8)
52 Versed in crosswords? (5,2)
53 Mutt at Number Ten is an oddity (5)
55 Blend of mostly tropical fruit (7)
58 Three-quarters of the mountains yield this aromatic compound (6)
64 Traveller in French country settles earlier (7)
66 Mini explosion which elicits a blessing (6)
74 Lustful desire harboured by male chauvinist (4)
77 City, then Hearts, finally beat Real (4)
78 See 84

The first 10 correct entries drawn each week win a copy of The Language Lover's Puzzle Book by Alex Bellos. Entries to: Guardian Crossword No 28,949, PO Box 17566, Birmingham B33 3EZ or by fax to 0121 742 1313 by Thursday 5 January. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday 9 January.

Name
Address

Postcode
Telephone number

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How many times a week do you buy the Guardian? ____

How many times a month do you buy the Observer? ____

Sandwich sudoku

Medium

Place the digits from 1-9 in each row, column and 3x3 block. The clues outside the grid show the sum of the numbers placed between the 1 and 9 in that row or column.

8				4					13
									20
					7			9	35
						2			15
		5				1			0
		3							12
6			7						16
									8
				1				8	3
0	20	0	5	0	23	18	5	0	

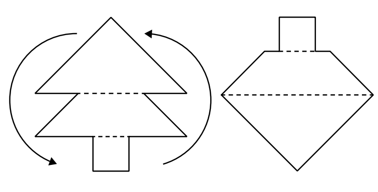
Chris Maslanka

Solutions

Pyrgic: 1 It is, of course, *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen* meaning "May the deity maintain you in a happy state, chaps". It can't be "ye" as the object case of "ye" is "you" and the folk addressed are the ones to be "rested". Meanwhile "Rest" is, of course a rare subjunctive of the kind we see in *God Save the King* and *Thank God!* "Merry", I hasten to add, is not here a euphemism for "drunk". Pedanticus stormed out of choir practice snapping at the hapless cleric: "A pity you're not a canon; or we could fire you."

2 It's easy to spot $a = 2$ is a solution as $2(2 \times 2 \times 2) - 3(2 \times 2) = 16 - 12 = 4$. But this means $(a - 2)$ is a factor of $2a^3 - 3a^2 - 4$. [**Point to Ponder** Why?] This in turn means that $2a^3 - 3a^2 - 4 = (a - 2)$[some expression involving a & a^2]. By long division or trial and error we find this expression to be $2a^2 + a + 2$; so $2a^3 - 3a^2 - 4 = (a - 2)(2a^2 + a + 2) = 0$. The first bracket provides Andy's solution: $(a - 2) = 0$, so $a = 2$; any further solutions come from the second: $(2a^2 + a + 2) = 0$. This is a quadratic. A quadratic $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$ has real number solutions if and only if $b^2 \geq 4ac$. In this case 1 is less than $4(2)(2) = 16$; so it has no real solutions but a pair of complex roots.

3



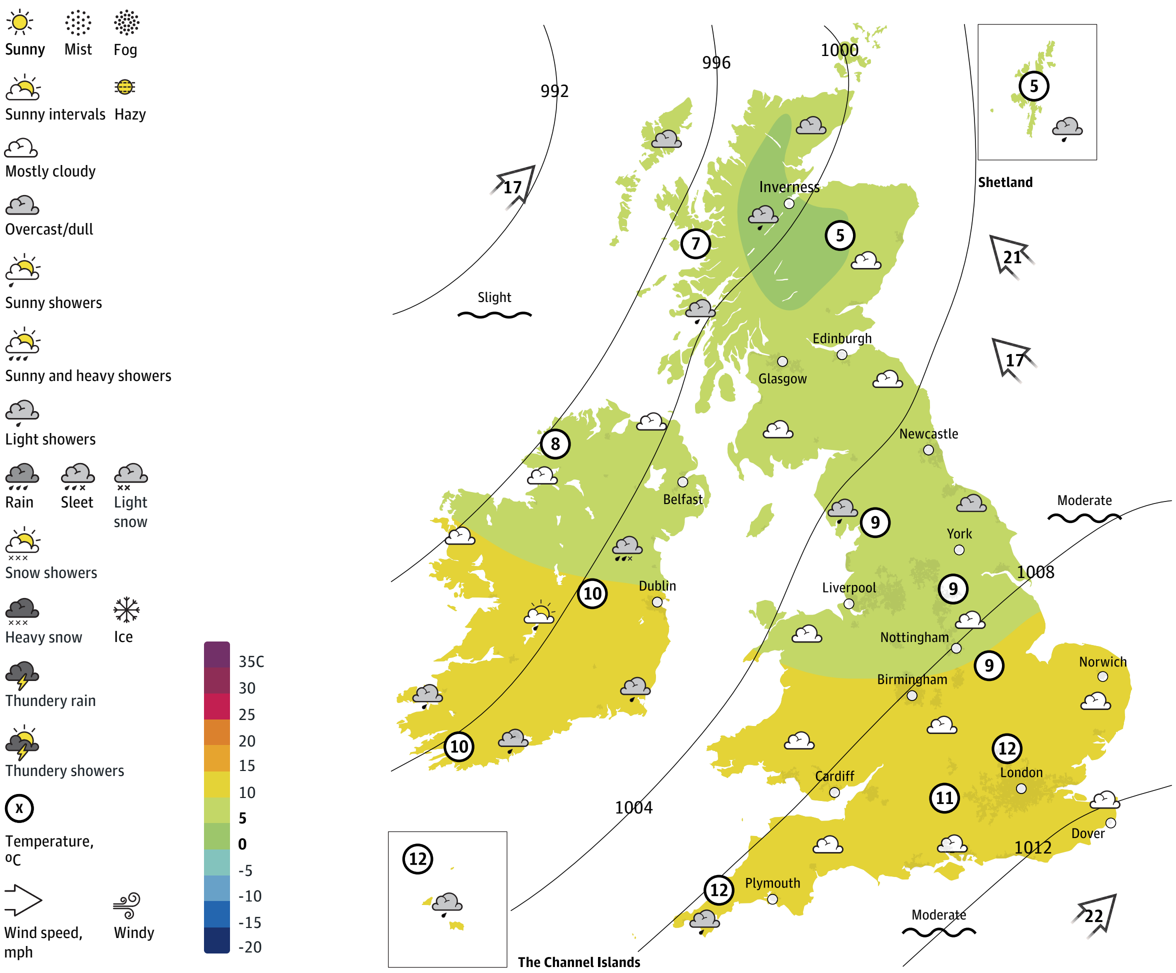
4 The number the Belgian detective was looking for was: 17125623475364.

5 257, 274. [It must be a 3-digit number [**Point to Ponder** How do you know?] Let the digits be a, b & c. If $abc = 5(a + b + c)$ one digit must be 5 [Why?]. Let it be c; then $5ab = 5(a + b + 5)$; so $ab = a + b + 5$; writing this as $(a - 1)(b - 1) = 6$ and, noting $6 = 1 \times 6$ or 2×3 (only), $(a, b) = (2, 7)$ or $(3, 4)$. The smallest such number is 257; the next possible is 275.]

Wordplay: Wordpool d), c), a); **Dropouts** FRUITCAKE; **EPU** MISTLETOE; **3-4-5** IVY, MAGI, HOLLY; **Cracker Barrel** Pants, Frostbite; **Missing Links** a) Christmas/cracker/barrel, b) cold/comfort/food, c) general/strike/rate, d) power/cut/price, e) holly/hock/joint, f) white/Christmas/stocking.

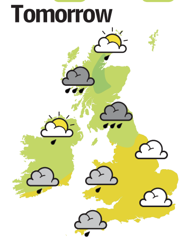
Weather
Saturday 24 December 2022

UK and Ireland Noon today

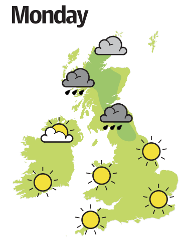


Forecast

Low 7 High 10
Tomorrow



Low 3 High 6
Monday



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO_2 readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

Latest	
22 Dec 2022	419.63
Weekly average	
11 Dec 2022	418.75
23 Dec 2021	416.34
23 Dec 2012	394.66
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

	Lows and highs		Precipitation	Air pollution
London	8	11	10%	Low
Manchester	7	9	25%	Low
Edinburgh	6	8	25%	Low
Belfast	6	9	85%	Low
Glasgow	6	9	25%	Low
Inverness	5	7	70%	Low
Leeds	7	9	25%	Low
Liverpool	7	10	25%	Low
Newcastle	6	8	25%	Low
Sheffield	7	9	20%	Low

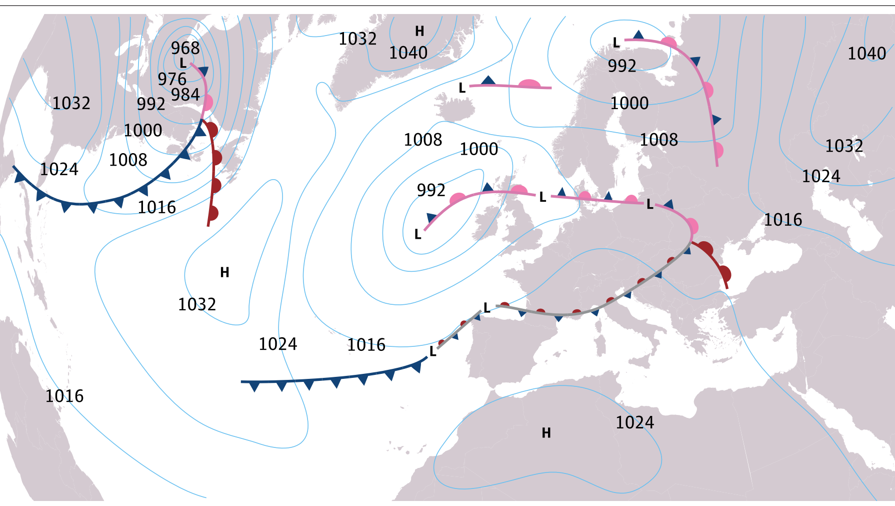
Atlantic front

Cold front

Warm front

Occluded front

Trough

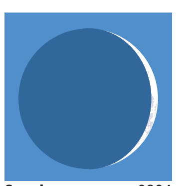


High tides

Source: © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Times are local UK times

Aberdeen	0127	4.4m	1342	4.4m
Avonmouth	0732	13.3m	1959	13.2m
Barrow	--	--	1144	9.5m
Belfast	1122	3.6m	2354	3.6m
Cobh	0544	4.2m	1806	4.1m
Cromer	0645	5.1m	1858	5.1m
Dover	1113	6.8m	2340	6.8m
Dublin	--	--	1147	4.3m
Galway	0518	5.4m	1750	5.3m
Greenock	0024	3.5m	1252	3.7m
Harwich	--	--	1203	4.1m
Holyhead	1037	5.8m	2306	5.7m
Hull	0631	7.6m	1847	7.7m
Leith	0244	5.7m	1500	5.7m
Liverpool	1125	9.5m	2353	9.4m
London Bridge	0157	6.9m	1419	7.3m
Lossiemouth	--	--	1214	4.2m
Milford Haven	0630	7.2m	1856	7.1m
Newquay	0520	7.2m	1746	7.1m
North Shields	0333	5.2m	1550	5.2m
Oban	0559	4.1m	1818	4.0m
Penzance	0453	5.7m	1717	5.5m
Plymouth	0605	5.6m	1833	5.4m
Portsmouth	--	--	1137	4.8m
Southport	1100	9.2m	2328	9.1m
Stornoway	0707	5.1m	1936	4.8m
Weymouth	0718	1.5m	1948	1.3m
Whitby	0409	5.6m	1627	5.6m
Wick	--	--	1139	3.7m
Workington	--	--	1147	8.5m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0804
Sun sets	1554
Moon rises	0942
Moon sets	1643
First Quarter	30 Dec

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2022

Lighting up

Belfast	1602 to 0847
Birm'ham	1557 to 0817
Brighton	1559 to 0802
Bristol	1606 to 0815
Carlisle	1546 to 0835
Cork	1627 to 0841
Dublin	1609 to 0840
Glasgow	1547 to 0848
Harlech	1604 to 0828
Inverness	1533 to 0858
London	1554 to 0805
M'chester	1554 to 0824
Newcastle	1541 to 0832
Norwich	1543 to 0806
Penzance	1624 to 0820

Weather tracker

Much of the US is experiencing very cold conditions as cold air plunges south from northern Canada to the Gulf coast.

An area of low pressure in the Great Lakes region brought snow and bitter winds. Twenty centimetres (8in) of snow was reported in the twin city area of Minneapolis-Saint Paul in Minnesota on Wednesday. The surge of cold air also affected areas farther west, with a sharp cold front bringing a 22C (40F) drop in just 30 minutes in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

The cold air and strong northerly winds resulted in wind-chill warnings being issued, covering an area from the Canadian border to Mexico. Wind-chill temperatures lower than -40C are expected, the temperature at which the celsius and fahrenheit scales intersect.

Last weekend travellers in Iceland found themselves stuck in Keflavik airport as flights were delayed or cancelled due to heavy snow. A few days earlier, a low pressure system developed off the east coast of Greenland and propagated eastwards towards Iceland. The Icelandic Met Office recorded a snow depth of 14cm at 9am last Saturday.

Lauren Herdman and James Parrish *Metdesk*

Around the world

Algiers	25	Lisbon	18
Ams'dam	10	Madrid	13
Athens	15	Malaga	22
Auckland	23	Melb'rne	23
B Aires	23	Mexico C	21
Bangkok	30	Miami	16
Barcelona	19	Milan	9
Basra	18	Mombasa	30
Beijing	2	Moscow	2
Berlin	8	Mumbai	30
Bermuda	22	N Orleans	2
Brussels	11	Nairobi	25
Budapest	11	New Delhi	19
C'hagen	2	New York	-6
Cairo	20	Oslo	-11
Cape Town	23	Paris	11
Chicago	-12	Perth	30
Corfu	17	Prague	10
Dakar	28	Reykjavik	-7
Dhaka	26	Rio de J	25
Dublin	10	Rome	17
Florence	14	Shanghai	6
Gibraltar	20	Singapore	28
H Kong	20	Stockh'm	-5
Harare	27	Strasb'g	13
Helsinki	-2	Sydney	30
Istanbul	12	Tel Aviv	20
Jo'burg	28	Tenerife	25
K Lumpur	31	Tokyo	12
K'mandu	18	Toronto	-7
Kabul	10	Vancouv'r	8
Kingston	31	Vienna	12
Kolkata	27	Warsaw	5
L Angeles	25	Wash'ton	-3
Lagos	30	Well'ton	20
Lima	25	Zurich	10

THIS CHRISTMAS
EXPERIENCE THE MOTION PICTURE
EVENT OF A GENERATION
★★★★★
EMPIRE
"ASTONISHING PIECE OF MOVIE-MAKING"
HEYUGUYS
★★★★ GAMES RADAR
★★★★ DAILY MAIL
★★★★ DAILY MIRROR
★★★★ DAILY EXPRESS
"BREATHTAKING… BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL"
NME
★★★★ HEYUGUYS
★★★★ TIME OUT
★★★★ EVENING STANDARD
★★★★ WHYNOW
AVATAR
THE WAY OF WATER
IN CINEMAS NOW
EXPERIENCE IT IN 3D*

24-30 December 2022

WHAT'S ON

HAVE A BALL
IT'S THE ULTIMATE STREAMING GUIDE

The Guardian

Ms Marvel

From the first female Muslim superhero to Lizzo's body-positive dance challenge and a radical porn comedy, **Phil Harrison** has all the best streaming shows to fill your festive hours

Full stream ahead

Atlanta

DRAMA

A League of Their Own

Prime Video
This cheery modern remake of the 90s film tells the true story of the 1940s female professional baseball team, the Rockford Peaches. Starring Abbi Jacobson, D'Arcy Carden and Chanté Adams, it deepens the movie to tell the stories of the queer women and women of colour on the team as they step up to the plate.

A Spy Among Friends

ITVX
This excellent dramatisation of the story of Kim Philby stars Guy Pearce as the traitorous spy. It does an evocative job of showing that Philby's betrayal was enabled by the emotional reserve and unspoken rules of the upper-class circles from which the espionage community was largely drawn. Damian Lewis and Anna Maxwell Martin also bring a blend of heartbreak and classy restraint.

Andor

Disney+
This Rogue One prequel joined a few more dots in the Star Wars universe and revealed its dark underbelly. By the end, it felt like one of the most essential additions to the SW canon ever: thrilling, smart and stylish. Diego Luna stars as the titular pilot and intelligence officer whose revolutionary activity puts him on a collision course with the empire.

Atlanta

Disney+
Donald Glover's revelatory and unique hip-hop drama returns for a final season. The gang are back in Atlanta now, but they're struggling to readjust to a home town that seems smaller and duller than the world they've just left. Surely something will have to give? As always with this gloriously groundbreaking show, expect the unexpected.

Gaslit

Lionsgate+
The show that launched a One Show takedown of Boris Johnson by one of its stars, Dan Stevens. And in the fetid air of 2022 politics, this Watergate dramatisation felt prescient - as a whistleblower (Julia Roberts's Martha Mitchell) is persecuted for telling the truth about government corruption. Stylish, starry, necessary.

George & Tammy

Paramount+
There's romance, rhinestones and ruin in this sharp but affectionate rendering of the passionate and dysfunctional relationship between Nashville icons Tammy Wynette and George Jones. Jessica Chastain and Michael Shannon's chemistry makes for irresistible melodrama, while their widescreen, middle America milieu is evoked beautifully.

Happy Valley

BBC iPlayer
With the third and final season of the Calder Valley crime masterpiece beginning on New Year's Day, get up to speed. Sarah Lancashire is outstanding as long-suffering cop Catherine Cawood, whose quest to keep James Norton's evil Tommy Lee Royce away from her grandson (and his son) Ryan is becoming ever more complicated.

Minx

Paramount+
Ophelia Lovibond plays Joyce, an earnest young feminist in 70s LA whose radical but unpopular magazine, The Matriarchy Awakens, comes under the influence of smut-peddler Doug (Jake Johnson). He has a tenuous grasp on intersectional theory, but reckons he knows what women want. Might he help her become "the porn queen of Pasadena"? A moreish comedy that's a total joy.

Ms Marvel

Disney+
The MCU's first Muslim superhero Kamala Khan (the brilliant Iman Vellani, in her first ever acting role) is a hugely relatable Pakistani-American teen who adores the Avengers and whose other preoccupations - fitting in, her interfering parents - are entirely universal. Kamala does acquire powers of her own but, essentially, this is a charming, funny and self-aware musing on fandom itself.

Pachinko

Apple TV+
A drama for which the adjective "panoramic" might have been invented, Pachinko swoops gracefully back and forth through the last century of Korean history. But for all of the grand, often traumatic events it documents, it never fails to explore the personal emotional dimension of history: how changing times change people.

The Peripheral

Prime Video
Pick your dystopia: impoverished backwoods America or a future London, decimated by war? This William Gibson adaptation is a stylish, head-spinning sci-fi, in which VR gameplay collides with reality across multiple timelines.

Slow Horses

Apple TV+
Deep in the bowels of Slough House languish the Slow Horses -

a dissolute crew of failed or disgraced spies led by the brilliant Gary Oldman's shambolic agent Jackson Lamb. But what can this misfit crew offer to the MI5? Perhaps their apparent lack of credibility is the greatest disguise of all?

Station Eleven

Lionsgate+
What would happen if a mysterious virus laid waste to billions of people? Notwithstanding the fact that humanity has recently been perilously close to finding out, this beautifully realised adaptation takes a nuanced view. There's horror, of course, but also a real sense of the survivors gaining fresh insights into what makes life worth living.

Wednesday

Netflix
Tim Burton's Addams Family reboot provides exactly what you'd expect: delightful gothic whimsy, lavish visual flourishes and a few jagged edges (high-school jocks attacked with flesh-eating fish!). This series focuses on the family's daughter and mixes classic teen coming-of-age tropes with a murder mystery. In a matter of weeks, it has become a cultural sensation of Stranger Things proportions.

Without Sin

ITVX, from Wednesday
In this captivating thriller, Vicky McClure and Johnny Harris reprise the dark, potent chemistry they displayed in This Is England. McClure is Stella Tomlinson, a woman traumatised by the murder of her daughter. Charles Stone (Harris) is in prison for the crime - but when he requests a restorative justice session, all hell breaks loose.

COMEDY

Big Boys

All 4
A small but perfectly formed gem of a sitcom: Dylan Llewellyn stars as fragile, closeted teen Jack who is paired with blokey mature student Danny (Jon Pointing) in their first year at university. A funny and tender friendship develops - Danny is lairy but never mean, while the recent loss of Jack's father lends an undertow of melancholy.

Detectorists

BBC iPlayer
Why not celebrate the festive return of Mackenzie Crook and Toby Jones's charming gold-diggers Andy and Lance by rummaging through the three seasons during which Detectorists became one of the BBC's most cherished recent offerings? A funny and profound musing on history, continuity and friendship.

Wednesday

Don't Hug Me I'm Scared

Lizzo's Watch Out for the Big Grrrls

Don't Hug Me I'm Scared

All 4
A beautifully oddball creation: this comedy initially has top notes of Sesame Street and Rainbow before sprawling, macabre details of a much darker hue become inescapable. Delightfully demented and, despite appearances, definitely not one to share with the kids.

How to With John Wilson

BBC iPlayer
A magnificent cross between an early Louis Theroux-style innocent and a television intellectual such as Jonathan Meades, documentary-maker Wilson serves up a unique and addictive series. The subject matter of each 20-odd-minute episode (scaffolding in New York, cooking risotto) can sound humdrum. But Wilson follows every story to strange, digressive, glorious places.

Ladhood

BBC iPlayer
Liam Williams's autobiographical coming-of-age comedy combines acute observations about class, gender and mental health with hilarious weed and alcopop-fuelled hijinks from his Leeds adolescence. How did the thoughtful, stroppy teen become the smart but restless adult?

Mo

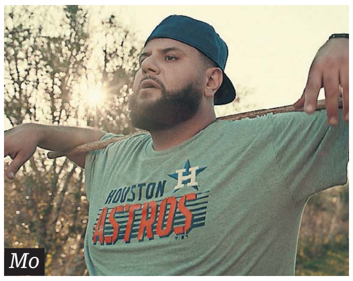
Netflix
A soulful immigrant story, with jokes. Mo Amer is Mohammed Najjar, a Palestinian refugee living semi-legally in Texas while he seeks asylum status. Mo could be bleak and earnest or worthy and dull but, happily, it's none of those things. Instead, it's a celebration of functional multiculturalism with a humane, subtly polemical heart.

The Rehearsal

Now
"I've been told my personality can make people uncomfortable," says Nathan Fielder. He's not wrong - this prank/reality comedy is one of the most brain-frying shows in years. The premise is that Fielder helps participants rehearse for difficult moments in their lives, but the rehearsals are so immersive that fact and fiction blur, to disorienting effect. You'll laugh, and you'll freak out, too.

Stewart Lee: Snowflake/Tornado

BBC iPlayer
The comic embodiment of the metropolitan elite parades his masterful, self-reflexive set from 2019-20. As ever, it's full of cultural provocations, brilliantly calibrated callbacks, uneasy audience interactions and hilarious disses of Alan Bennett. The place where standup and the avant garde meet.


Mo

Andor

REALITY/ DOCUMENTARY

Drink Masters

Netflix
Since it's Christmas, might a boozy Bake Off hit the spot? This entertaining series applies the eliminative competition show format to the world of mixology - and it turns out barkeeps are capable of getting every bit as molecular as high-end chefs in search of "masterpieces of liquid art".

Frozen Planet II

BBC iPlayer
David Attenborough's journeys into natural wonder shouldn't be taken for granted: this latest series throws up yet more painstakingly filmed beauty and strangeness from the coldest depths and peaks of the world. From the hilarious Pallas's Cat to the awe-inspiring Siberian tiger, the planet's fragile glory has never been better captured.

A League of Their Own

Joe Pera Talks With You

All 4
Part of the Adult Swim TV empire, but tonally unlike anything else they've produced, this wonderfully gentle yet deceptively peculiar series sees Pera - a gangling, slightly awkward naif - sharing bite-size snippets of wisdom on all manner of matters from the construction of a bean arch to obituary writing.

Lizzo's Watch Out for the Big Grrrls

Prime Video
Lizzo is looking for back-up dancers for her world tour, but she's after girls who look a bit like her. This cheerful reality show sees 13 women face-off for the gig. Even though there's a competitive element, the tone is entirely affirming: "curves and confidence" are the order of the day and Lizzo herself is a relentlessly positive presence.

Russia 1985-1999: TraumaZone

BBC iPlayer
A departure for Adam Curtis - this latest series from the enigmatic magus of the BBC archives features no voiceover and no music. Instead, the remarkable images carry the staggering and harrowing story. How did it feel to watch not one but two systems of government collapse in the space of two decades? The ramifications could hardly be more pertinent. An intuitive emotional history, darkly comic and utterly tragic.

Storyville: The Fire Within

BBC iPlayer
The pick of the many excellent Storyville documentaries currently on iPlayer is Werner Herzog's startling requiem for volcano-chasers Katia and Maurice Krafft, whose lifelong passion caught up with them when they died in 1991. The close eruption footage they captured makes the risks they took seem understandable.

The Tinder Swindler

Netflix
One of the best of Netflix's glut of true-crime documentaries is this enraging tale about conman Simon Leviev who used the titular dating app to contact women, seduce them with lavish gifts then relieve them of large sums of money. The story is told from the emotional viewpoint of Leviev's victims, which elevates it above the prurient.

DISNEY/AP; GUY D'ALEMA/FX; JAMES CLARK

Pick of the week
Mayflies
Wednesday, 9pm, BBC One

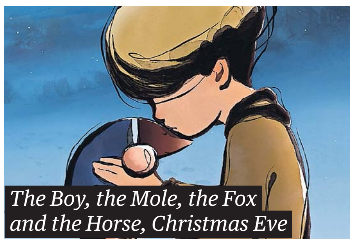
This beautifully told two-part story is an adaptation of Andrew O'Hagan's 2020 novel, delicately tackling male friendship, loyalty and grief. When Tully Dawson (Tony Curran) tells his best pal Jimmy (Martin Compston) that he has terminal cancer, the two men reminisce over old times growing up in a working-class coastal town near Glasgow during the 80s. Curran is deeply moving as a man who refuses to let death have the last laugh, with Ashley Jensen as his firecracker wife Anna. With plenty of flashbacks brimming with rebellious teen spirit and a soundtrack of New Order and the Smiths, it's a nostalgic and poignant watch for the quieter days of the festive period. *Hollie Richardson*

Christmas Eve

Pick of the day
Christmas Carole
8pm, Sky Max
"Christmas is a lie, made up by American corporations!" The great Suranne Jones gets to channel Scrooge in this modern spin on the Dickens classic, playing a mean entrepreneur who has made a fortune selling single-use festive tat. As a lucrative takeover deal looms on Christmas Eve, will Carole learn the error of her ways? In a canny twist, the spirits who visit her are embodied by comedians, kicking off with Morecambe and Wise (Jonty Stephens and Ian Ashpitel) as ghosts of Christmas past. *Graeme Virtue*

The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse
4.55pm, BBC One
In just three years, Charlie Mackesy's tale of heartwarming friendship has become a children's classic. Now, its distinctive illustrations have been adapted into a hand-drawn animated film, featuring the voices of Tom Hollander as the cheery mole, Idris Elba as the honest fox and Gabriel Byrne as the wise horse. *Ellen E Jones*

His Dark Materials
7pm, BBC One
Things are already getting grim in season three of the complex fantasy drama based on Philip Pullman's novels, not least because scrappy heroine Lyra (Dafne Keen) is being kept in a drugged stupor by her obsessive mother. Can knife guy Will (Amir Wilson) reach her before the Magisterium swoops in? *GV*


The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse, Christmas Eve

His Dark Materials, Christmas Eve

The Great Christmas Bake Off 2022
8.25pm, Channel 4
In Matt Lucas's final baking foray, Channel 4 is celebrating its 40th anniversary by sending four icons from its past into battle. "I've never even used a mixer!" squeals Big Breakfast presenter Gaby Roslin, as Popworld's Miquita Oliver tackles a terror-inducing mirror glaze. *Danielle De Wolfe*

Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Christmas Fishing 2022
8.40pm, BBC Two
The comedian pals must have been angling for a bigger travel budget, because they're in Norway for this year's hour-long special, a country neither Paul nor Bob has visited previously. The Lofoten Islands don't quite count as Santa's post code, but they're close. And there are enough festive-sounding fish species to keep Paul happy. *EEJ*

Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker!, Christmas Day

Christmas Comedy Club With Lost Voice Guy
10.40pm, ITV
Lee Ridley returns with his second yuletide comedy extravaganza. Standup from ventriloquist Paul Zerdin, comedians Josie Long and Dara Ó Briain, and freestyle rapper and comedian Abandoman (think Flight of the Conchords meets Eminem), complete a veritable festive feast. *DDW*

Christmas Day

Pick of the day
Ghosts Christmas Special
7.25pm, BBC One
"Alison discovers a VHS of Pat's Christmas home movies" will have fans of this heart-burstingly lovely sitcom crying happy tears just at the thought of it. The festive episode is another perfectly judged sentimental journey, as the ghosts then put on a pantomime - a chance for some delicious gags about fussy thespians. *Jack Seale*

Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker!
1.30pm, BBC Two
Bourne's reimagining of the Tchaikovsky ballet marks 30 years of being on the stage. The festive journey of orphan girl Clara, from grey destitution to a multicoloured candy kingdom with echoes of 1930s Hollywood musicals, remains bold and transgressive but with sturdy classical form. *JS*

The Smeds and the Smoos
2.30pm, BBC One
Following the likes of The Gruffalo and Stick Man, here's the latest animated version of a Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler bestseller: a love-across-the-tracks allegory, in which the warring red smeds and the blue smoos learn to bury the hatchet. An all-star voice cast includes Sally Hawkins, Bill Bailey and Meera Syal. *Ali Catterall*

Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special
5.10pm, BBC One
The silver star trophy will be held high one more time in this fab-u-lous teatime entertainment. CBeebies presenter George Webster is paired with Amy Dowden, Girls Aloud's Nicola Roberts gets the joy of Giovanni Pernice and ex-EastEnder Larry Lamb steps out with Nadiya Bychkova. *Hannah Verdier*

Call the Midwife
7.55pm, BBC One
As always, the festivities in 1960s Poplar are cosy but edged with ire at social issues. A pregnant woman of colour deals with racist local authorities, while a patient on the other side of a language barrier requires extra care and compassion from the midwives. Two beloved old faces also reappear. *JS*

Doc Martin Christmas Special
9.05pm, ITV
Christmas in pretty Portwenn is cancelled when the village's crotchety medic (played by Martin Clunes for the past 18 years) bans a suspiciously itchy Santa (Ron Cook) from working in his grotto. Things seem bleak, but surely the last ever episode of such a beloved and durable drama will not end on a downer? *GV*

Boxing Day

Pick of the day
Detectorists Special
9pm, BBC Two
This almost feature-length episode finds Lance and Andy (Toby Jones and Mackenzie Crook) still living their best lives, although it's a close-run thing at times as Lance momentarily turns into Gollum over an exciting find and puts the pair's relationship under strain. But as ever, the underlying message is that friendship is the real treasure. It's a supremely gentle but deceptively profound pleasure to watch. *Phil Harrison*

The Greatest Snowman 2022
7.30pm, Channel 4
Five celebrities - Gemma Collins, Gareth Malone, Melvin Odoom, Joe Thomas and Yinka Bokinni - vie to build a fantastical array of snow sculptures, before taking on the final challenge: the towering titular titan. Hopefully, there'll be some sort of sandcastle follow-up this summer. Or perhaps a Wicker Man contest next May Day. *AC*

The Repair Shop Christmas Special
8pm, BBC One
East London's finest repairman Jay Blades turns back time this Christmas, helped by a posse of artisan elves. Tonight's mission? Transforming relics steeped in history, including a family's beloved yet bedraggled century-old Christmas tree and an ancient trombone. *DDW*

Royal Institution Christmas Lectures With Dame Sue Black
8pm, BBC Four
The hidden gem of Boxing Day's schedule is an absolute cracker this year, with "corpse whisperer" Prof Sue Black demonstrating what looking at a 1,000-year-old skeleton can reveal about the human body. Her Silent Witness equivalent, Emilia Fox, will also watch the forensic forage, along with a studio audience to help with interactive experiments. *HV*

The Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2022
9pm, Channel 4
Has another year passed already? And can anyone remember what happened? Questions even bigger and fatter than these will be attempted by guests including

JAMIE SIMPSON/BBC; CAROLINE DUBOIS/BBC; ROB PARFITT/CHANNEL 4

Lionesses: How Football Came Home, Tue

Stephen Merchant, Katherine Ryan, Richard Ayoade and Rose Matafeo. Meanwhile, Charles Dance and the children of Mitchell Brook Primary School will give Jimmy Carr a run for the quizmaster mantle. *EEJ*

Robbie Coltrane at the BBC
9pm, BBC Four
Celia Imrie narrates an archive-raiding tribute to the star who died earlier this year. His journey from comic to comic actor to straight actor, and then from television to blockbuster movies, is mapped out via his BBC appearances, both as a performer and a lively chatshow guest. *JS*

Tuesday

Pick of the day
Coppélia
6.15pm, BBC Two
This fresh spin on the tale of an entrancingly lifelike mechanical doll cleverly fuses animation and ballet. Dr Coppelius (Vito Mazzeo) is a cosmetic surgeon who causes a stir when he arrives in a charming European village that looks plucked from an early Disney film. It's up to Swan (the staggeringly talented Michaela DePrince) to uncover the uncanny secret of his beautiful protege, Coppélia. *Katie Rosseinsky*

Miriam Margolyes: Australia Unmasked
9pm, BBC Two
The concept of giving everyone "a fair go" is central to Australian culture. On this journey to Oz, our indomitable guide wants to know how much it stands up. Kicking off her three-part exploration in Tasmania, she meets Indigenous activist Michael Mansell, samples roadkill with politician Jacqui Lambie, and uncovers some shocking illiteracy issues. *AC*

First Dates at Christmas
9pm, Channel 4
Looking for love in Fred Sirieix's restaurant this week: portrait artist Charlie who has already proposed to five women, vicar Eve looking to finally get her prayers answered, dad-joke connoisseur Steve, Eve the self-proclaimed queen of Christmas and student Taylor – whose longest relationship lasted 18 hours. *HR*

Lionesses: How Football Came Home
9pm, Sky Documentaries
The triumph of the England women's football team was the feelgood story of the summer. This documentary boasts behind-the-scenes access to the squad as they progressed through Euro 2022. From Alessia Russo's outrageous back-heeled goal against Sweden to Chloe Kelly's heroics in the final, prepare to relive a glorious few weeks. *PH*

Frankie Boyle's 2022 New World Order
10pm, BBC Two
Dark satire is the order of the day, as Frankie Boyle returns with his reflections on what has been a particularly unsettling year. From the conveyor belt of three prime ministers to the death of the queen and Matt Hancock's desperate stint on I'm a Celebrity, the comedian's signature foul-mouthed rants and searing observations always make for compelling standup. *DDW*

The Lateish Show With Mo Gilligan: Christmas Special
10pm, Channel 4
Top marks to the guest booker: joining Mo's festivities this year is a studio full of straight-talkers, including standup Jason Manford, podcaster Marvin Humes, sitcom genius Sophie Willan and father-daughter duo the Dyers. This frankness will come in handy when it's "risque questions from the public" time. *EEJ*

Wednesday

Pick of the day
Dogs in the Wild: Meet the Family
8pm, BBC One
Meet the canids, a global family with 37 members including wolves, foxes, jackals and dogs. While the domestic breeds have been part of human households since Paleolithic times, their wild cousins are less familiar. In this three-part series, Chris Packham makes some introductions, with the cute, big-eared fennec fox an instant favourite. *EEJ*

Vienna Blood
9pm, BBC Two
The wonderfully evocative period sleuther concludes with a juicy case: a film star is in attendance at a glitzy premiere, then spoils it by dying of poisoning during the screening. She's an old patient of Max, but her backstory is even richer than it looks, and the investigation leads into the darker corners of turn-of-the-century Austrian politics. *JS*

Jon and Lucy's Party of the Year
9pm, Channel 4
Jon Richardson and Lucy Beaumont call on their celebrity pals for a boozy bonanza in the run-up to the new year. Romesh Ranganathan, Judi Love and Tom Allen join in the merriness, which involves challenging a Lioness to do a TikTok and strapping one of the hosts to a spinning wheel. *HR*

New Amsterdam
9pm, Sky Witness
Abortion rights are in the spotlight in the first of this week's double bill of this medical drama. As a patient faces a pregnancy that has put her life in danger, she finds herself turning to staff about what options she has in the light of the supreme court decision. Don't expect it to make the US judiciary look great. *Alexi Duggins*

Rosie Molloy Gives Up Everything
10pm, Sky Comedy
Rosie (Sheridan Smith) continues her spectacularly scattergun efforts to clean up her act and kick her habits, this time ditching rehab to hang out with a hippy couple who run a mobile drug-dealing empire before accidentally uncovering a family secret. Smith is such an empathetic screen presence it's hard not to root for her. *KR*

Thursday

Pick of the day
Prince Andrew: The Musical
9pm, Channel 4
Desperate television or a work of provocative art? You decide, as the story of Prince Andrew's downfall is played out in this bizarre musical production – starting with that infamous interview with Emily Maitlis (Emma Sidi). Kieran Hodgson plays the prince who cannot sweat, while Baga Chipz is Margaret Thatcher and Munya Chawawa is Prince Charles. *HR*

Antiques Roadshow Christmas Special: Toys and Childhood
8pm, BBC One
From teddy bears to Teletubbies, it's all about toys in this seasonal edition. Cherished childhood playthings such as marionettes made by prisoners of war and Star Wars figurines steal the limelight, and Fiona Bruce joins fanatical toy collector Jonathan Ross. *DDW*

Marie Antoinette, Thu

Prince Andrew: The Musical, Thu

Farewell Doc Martin
8.30pm, ITV
After 10 seasons, the final episode of Doc Martin aired on Christmas Day. For those already suffering withdrawal, here's a hit of Clunesian context: a comprehensive behind-the-scenes documentary tracking the quirky Cornwall-set drama's evolution from reworked film character spin-off to surprise global fan favourite. *GV*

Marie Antoinette
9pm, BBC Two
From The Favourite writer Deborah Davis (although this takes a much straighter tone), here's an extravagant eight-part drama about France's doomed teenage queen. It starts with Antoinette swapping the comfort of her Austrian home for the palpably frosty French court, where she meets her insipid husband-to-be, Louis XVI. *HR*

John Bishop's End of Year Show
9.35pm, ITV
At the start of this year, Bishop's show successfully mixed topical standup – a little more barbed than his chummy demeanour might suggest – with celebrity chat. Ahead of season two, this special rounds up the events of 2022, with actor Ian McKellen and footballer Beth Mead among the guests. *JS*

Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne
11pm, BBC Three
Delevingne swaps sex for the science of love in this episode. Falling asleep in an MRI scanner, meeting a woman who's marrying a character from the Sims and visiting a Mexican love hotel are on the agenda. She also investigates the pros and cons of throupling. *HV*

Friday

Pick of the day
Macaque: Monkeys in the Mountains – A Dynasties Special
7.30pm, BBC One
Because it's not Christmas without a David Attenborough documentary … Among the Barbary macaque monkeys of Morocco's Atlas Mountains, Mac is king of the swingers through scorching summers and frostbitten winters – until a vicious rival steals his crown. Can the banished Mac forge alliances and get his monkey mojo back? *AC*

The Year in Music at the BBC: 2022
6.30pm, BBC Two
One more tune! In a year that saw the emphatic return of live music, Lauren Laverne cherrypicks highlights of the BBC's output. Encompassing everything from large-scale festivals to studio jams with Jools, that means performances from Little Simz, Pet Shop Boys and Stormzy (plus, of course, Macca at Glasto). *GV*

Would I Lie to You? at Christmas
8.30pm, BBC One
Sophie Willan, Guz Khan, Gloria Hunniford and Christopher Eccleston are among the festive fibbers. Questions include: do the Hunniford family run a sweepstake on when she'll doze off? Did Khan use walk-on music when he was a teacher? And will this lovely format ever get old? *AD*

My Old School
9pm, BBC Two
The Brandon Lee scandal is one of those that a newspaper headline cannot adequately explain. In 1993, a 30-year-old former student of Scotland's Bearsden Academy re-enrolled, passing himself off as a 17-year-old. It takes a documentary such as this one, made by a classmate of "Brandon" and starring Alan Cumming, to discover why. *EEJ*

Celebrity Christmas Hell
10.15pm, Channel 4
Ever wondered how B-list celebrities really celebrate Christmas? Oh … well you're about to find out anyway, as the likes of Joel Dommett, Michael Whitehall, Oti and Motsi Mabuse, Katherine Ryan and Alex Brooker invite cameras into their homes. *HR*

Jason Manford: Recent Nostalgia
10.30pm, BBC One
Recorded in September, the highlight of Manford's lockdown-inspired standup is the climactic Assembly Bangers – a happy house medley of school assembly classics including This Little Light of Mine and Lord of the Dance. Fun! *HR*

Film pick

Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore

Christmas Day, 12.30pm, 8pm, Sky Cinema Premiere

In what may turn out to be the final outing for Newt and co, regular Wizarding World director David Yates concentrates more on the battle between Jude Law's Dumbledore and his arch enemy Grindelwald (Mads Mikkelsen, taking over from Johnny Depp). Their history together - through a blood pact - forces Albus to recruit a team including Eddie Redmayne's creature wrangler and his auror brother Theseus (Callum Turner) to stop him. It's a tangled narrative web but inventively staged. *Reviews by Simon Wardell*

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

Christmas Day, 3.10pm, BBC Two

After being put through the wringer with Netflix's Blonde, perhaps you'd like some lighter Marilyn Monroe content? This 1953 Howard Hawks musical comedy is fluff of the highest order, starring Monroe and Jane Russell as showgirl friends who find romance and intrigue on an Atlantic liner. It's worth watching just for Monroe's rendition of Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend. An even better Monroe performance is to be found in Billy Wilder's Some Like It Hot, which follows at 4.40pm.

Home Alone 2: Lost in New York

Christmas Day, 5.30pm, Channel 4

Macaulay Culkin's littlest sadist returns to wreak havoc on the lives of two put-upon criminals in Chris Columbus's if-it-ain't-broke sequel. A shocking lapse in security at the airport sends Kevin to New York and his family to Florida. The resourceful kid holes up in the Plaza hotel (complete with a cameo from its then owner, Donald Trump) but bumps into Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern's Wet Bandits. His uncle's half-built house is the site for a new, but still exhilarating, series of booby traps involving bricks, nail guns and electricity. Cartoonish violence ensues.

The Duke

Christmas Eve, 1.15pm, 10.55pm, Sky Cinema Premiere

Roger Michell's unexpected death in September left a hole in British cinema that had been filled by his mainstream but rarely comfy dramas. His final fiction feature, The Duke, is in that lineage, with Jim Broadbent as a prickly but largely lovable character taking on the system. It's a remarkable true story, as 1960s taxi driver Kempton Bunton - whose campaign to exempt pensioners from the TV licence fee is going nowhere - steals a Goya portrait from London's National Gallery and holds it to ransom to publicise the issue.

It's a Wonderful Life

Christmas Eve, 1.25pm, Channel 4

James Stewart, Hollywood's go-to everyman, offers a lesson in the (hopefully) true spirit of the season in Frank Capra's smart twist on A Christmas Carol. It's not much of a jolly start, as Stewart's disgraced businessman George Bailey stands on a bridge on Christmas Eve, contemplating throwing himself off it. Luckily, Henry Travers's Clarence, a guardian angel (second class), intervenes, then takes him on a journey through time to show George how much he has actually achieved in his life - and how much worse the world would be without him in it.

La La Land

Christmas Eve, 1am, BBC One

It didn't win the best film Oscar in the end, but Damien Chazelle's part homage, part rewriting of the classic Hollywood musical is a joyous experience. Aspiring actor Mia (Emma Stone) and aspiring jazz pianist Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) fall for each other in an LA of primary colours and perfect sunsets, and the film is as much in love with the city as the couple. Dreams - attainable and not - temper their affair, with Stone and Gosling's non-Broadway dancing and singing (music by Justin Hurwitz) giving a naturalistic twist to the gloriously stylised visuals.

Aladdin

Christmas Day, 3.10pm, BBC One

In Guy Ritchie's live-action take on the classic Disney animation, Will Smith has the hardest task: taking over from Robin Williams as the Genie. It's a role the comedian moulded in his own image but Smith does an admirable job, sharply comic if lacking Williams's scattershot energy. The revisionist casting, with actors of mostly Arabic origin, is also a hit - Mena Massoud as Aladdin and Naomi Scott as Princess Jasmine make a sweet couple. And baddy Jafar (Marwan Kenzari) avoids cartoonish menace, though he still has a pet parrot called Iago.

Grease

Christmas Day, 6.45pm, Film4

Another loss to the entertainment world this year was Olivia Newton-John. Although film wasn't her natural home, the singer is perfect as the naive, ponytailed Sandy in this boisterous 1978 rock'n'roll musical. In the wake of Saturday Night Fever, John Travolta was the main draw as high-school bad boy Danny. He shows his tender side in the song Sandy, but it's Newton-John in Hopelessly Devoted to You who nails the romance. The jury's out on whether Sandy's transformation into a leather-jacketed, permed smoker is an improvement, but she does get her guy ...

WARNER BROS; NETFLIX; WILSON WEBB/NETFLIX

Love Actually

Christmas Day, 11pm, ITV1
After Four Weddings and Notting Hill, Richard Curtis decided to expand his romcom remit with this 2003 film, featuring at least eight variations on the theme. Its overlapping stories include the prime minister (Hugh Grant, naturally) and a No 10 staff member (Martine McCutcheon); widower Liam Neeson's young son and a classmate; and Martin Freeman and Joanna Page as film body doubles. There's adultery and unrequited love, too, to add tartness to a mostly sweet experience.

The Mitchells vs the Machines

Boxing Day, 3.45pm, ITV1
It's tough when you're a budding film-maker in tune with the social media zeitgeist, and your dad can't even switch on his laptop. And then there's the digital gadgets that have just taken over the world … Michael Rianda and Jeff Rowe's fantastic animated adventure sneaks questions about growing up and parental relationships into a buzzy, witty disaster plot, as teenager Katie (Broad City's Abbi Jacobson) uses her tech skills to defeat Olivia Colman's evil smartphone - but ultimately still needs the DIY abilities of her embarrassing father, Rick (Danny McBride), to win the day.

Mary Poppins

Boxing Day, 2.25pm, BBC One
Apparently, Mary Poppins author PL Travers loathed the songs, the animation and the softening of the lead character in the 1964 Disney adaptation. She also didn't want Dick Van Dyke, which is understandable, but on the first three points it's hard to be disappointed with the finished film. The visual effects may have dated but the hit rate is high on the song count, Julie Andrews is strict enough as the magical nanny, and Dick "Worst Cockney Ever" Van Dyke is terrific when he confines himself to singing and dancing.

Goodfellas

Boxing Day, 10.15pm, BBC Two
Martin Scorsese's 1990 crime drama gives The Godfather a run for its money as the greatest mob movie ever. Ray Liotta (one more for the 2023 Oscars In Memoriam segment) has never been better as Henry Hill, a real-life figure drawn into mafia life in Brooklyn and the orbit of two malevolent and occasionally terrifying gangsters: Jimmy the Gent (Robert De Niro) and Tommy (Joe Pesci). The 30 years of their involvement is told in depth and with style - the sustained single shot of Henry and his girl arriving at a club is a doozy - and features a choice soundtrack of period hits.

1917

Tuesday, 9pm, BBC One
A film that grabs you from the off and never lets up, Sam Mendes's devastating first world war thriller uses a single-camera setup to follow two British soldiers (George MacKay and Dean-Charles Chapman) through the battlefields of France. They must take a message calling off an attack to the frontline, but their route is an obstacle course of danger. Through muddy trenches, dust-choked tunnels and bombed-out fields and towns, we experience every moment of their confusion and terror in a work of pure cinema.

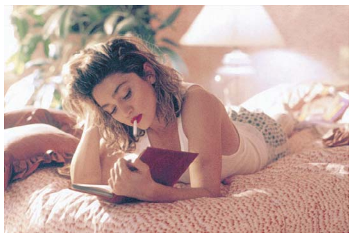
Heat

Wednesday, 10.30pm, BBC Two
Michael Mann's honed thriller is a study in contrasts, embodied in Robert De Niro's thief and Al Pacino's LA cop. De Niro's Neil is fastidious and emotionally distant; Pacino's Vincent is instinctive and passionate. However, they are both obsessive about their work, which makes this film's cat-and-mouse plot zing, as Neil plans his next job while contending with antagonistic criminal elements and Vincent's dogged pursuit. The big acting beasts of their age, De Niro and Pacino make the most of their first film on screen together in a tale enamoured of the minutiae of both the heist and its investigation.

Film pick
White Noise
Friday, Netflix

You've got to admire Noah Baumbach for taking on a film of Don DeLillo's great American novel. Thankfully, his trademark mix of arch comedy and existential drama serves the source material well. Adam Driver stars as Jack Gladney, a professor of Hitler studies in a middle-America college - which enables satirical swipes at the self-absorption of academia, often involving his colleague Murray (Don Cheadle), a lecturer on Elvis. He's on his fourth marriage, to Greta Gerwig's Babette (it's her second), and they share four children. They're both obsessed by death, which is brought home to them when an "airborne toxic event" forces them to evacuate. It's an odd but surprisingly action-packed mix, pondering the insidious power of consumer culture and the vain hope that technology can fix things technological advancement has, in fact, caused.

The Mitchells vs the Machines, Boxing Day



Desperately Seeking Susan

Thursday, 10.55pm, BBC Two
It's Madge Night on the Beeb, so along with archive performance footage and behind-the-scenes documentary Truth Or Dare comes one of Madonna's few acting successes. In Susan Siedelman's 1985 New York comedy thriller, she's actually not on screen as much as Rosanna Arquette who plays unhappy New Jersey housewife Roberta, intrigued by girl-about-town Susan (Madonna). When she's mistaken for the errant Susan, Roberta is thrown into a murder caper, while riffing off the singer's soon-to-be-iconic image.

Raiders of the Lost Ark

Friday, 8pm, Channel 4
The new year will bring a new Indiana Jones film (The Dial of Destiny!?) but the fact that the teaser trailer features scenes revisiting the best moments from the original (Nazis, large rolling stones, whips), it's probably better just to watch the 1981 film instead. Harrison Ford gave his Han Solo character a more donnish air, but the swashbuckling heroics are the same, as Indy races the Third Reich for the biblical Ark of the Covenant from Peruvian rainforest to Nepal to Egyptian desert - all controlled with an eye for a comic action set piece by Steven Spielberg.

Radio

Inside Music: Gareth Malone
Christmas Eve, 1pm, Radio 3
We're back once again with the peppy choirmaster: having knocked amateur carollers into shape for multiple festive concerts, Malone knows a thing or two about Christmas songs. So he seems like the perfect choice for this anticipatory edition of Inside Music. His playlist includes plenty of seasonal choral selections - with cuts from the King's Singers, the Dresden Philharmonic Children's Choir and more - but also a brassy Chopin cover, early music from the Dufay Collective and a fiery floor-filler from Stravinsky. *Graeme Virtue*

Desert Island Discs
Christmas Day, 11.15am, Radio 4
After 13 years leading some of radio's most beautiful interviews, Kirsty Young (pictured) reluctantly stepped away from Desert Island Discs in 2019 due to a fibromyalgia diagnosis. In what is set to be a highlight in the DID vaults, Young returns as a castaway to share her eight tracks with current host Lauren Laverne. "Making anyone narrow down their favourite discs to just eight is frankly unreasonable," she recently said, calling it a "slightly discombobulating" experience. *Hollie Richardson*

The Signalman
Christmas Day, 3.15pm, Radio 4
Charles Dickens's second-most famous seasonal ghost story gets a spooky new adaptation, courtesy of playwright Jonathan Holloway. The Visitor (James Purefoy) is on a countryside ramble when he happens upon a gloomy tunnel and a solitary railway signalman (Samuel West). This man relates a tale of spectres and disaster foretold, which may draw on Dickens's own traumatic experience of an 1865 rail crash. *Ellen E Jones*

Rob Delaney: 6 Music's This Is Us
Christmas Day, 6pm, 6 Music
Back in 2002, 6 Music instigated a festive tradition of inviting a prominent artist to host a show reviewing the year in music (previous curators include Russell Crowe, Haim and Nadine Shah, which are all available on BBC Sounds). With the station celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, Rob Delaney has been allowed to cast his net wider, selecting his favourite tracks from the past two decades. The Catastrophe co-creator's playlist includes Radiohead, Brian Eno, Laura Veirs, Beastie Boys and more. *GV*

Mica's Gospel Christmas
Christmas Day, 7pm, Radio Two
Soul star Mica Paris celebrates the big day with a whole lot of soul, paying homage to her gospel roots with a playlist boasting the likes of Aretha Franklin, Mary Mary, Kirk Franklin, the Clark Sisters, Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey. She's joined by Emeli Sandé, who also helps pick the tracks while sharing personal memories about the music that has most moved her. *HR*

Just a Minute
Boxing Day, 6.30pm, Radio 4
"I've bought a variety of different objects during the Boxing Day sales over the years … " So begins Paul Merton's endless list of predictably improbable items, ranging from togas to dentist chairs and squirrels - but at least you can't accuse him of repetition. He's joined by Julian Clary and, making their Just a Minute debuts, Anna Maxwell Martin and Jennifer Saunders for subjects including It's a Wonderful Life, mulled wine and fridge magnets bought on holidays. *Ali Catterall*

BBC Correspondents' Look Ahead
Fri, 10.06pm, BBC World Service
With 2023 just round the corner, special correspondent Razia Iqbal invites journalists to help predict what the new year will bring. As you might already have guessed, it's not exactly looking sparkling. What will happen with Putin's war against Ukraine? Will Joe Biden keep his promise of no new cold war with China? Will the cost of living crisis ease with a post-pandemic economic rebound? And what role will Brazil's new president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva play in the fight against climate change? Tune in, if you can handle being bummed out for an hour. *HR*

Podcasts
Pick of the week

I'm OK Though
Widely available, episodes weekly
"I never go: 'You know what? I'm glad you asked because I'm really struggling.'" A lack of honesty around our feelings is just one of the issues tackled in this chatty mental health podcast from Stormzy's music producer Owen Cutts and his therapist friend Jodie Cariss (pictured). They discuss the ways our unconscious can affect our day-to-day, and why Cariss's drama therapy doesn't actually involve ropey acting in community halls. *Alexi Duggins*

Queen of the Con: Rich Girl
Widely available, episodes weekly
This new season is all about notorious con artist Danielle Miller, who flaunted her glamorous life on social media. It opens with Miller ("She looks like a Kardashian if you squint") being busted as she recovers from her Brazilian butt lift and examines how she swindled the US government out of $1m. *Hannah Verdier*

London Pub Reviews
Widely available, episodes weekly
December means one thing for aficionados of London public houses: the return of the Tim Key-hosted (pictured, above right) deep dive into the finest places to find quality craft ale. Each venue gets an enjoyably daft five-minute narrative about the experience of drinking there, from squabbles over dartboards to surreal skits about a hurricane caused by a toilet hand dryer. *AD*

Retirement House
Widely available, episodes weekly
For the uninitiated, Retirement House is a TikTok hit, with its over-70s inhabitants entertaining the youngsters with a knowing wink. And here comes their podcast, with rapper Lil Pump getting a full inquisition ("What is this SoundCloud?") along with some touching life lessons from the six seniors about gratitude, grasping life and living it to the full. *HV*

Frozen Head
Widely available, episodes weekly
Would you freeze your body in the hope of being resurrected one day? In this engrossing and slightly gruesome series, hosts Alaina Urquhart and Ash Kelley delve into cryonics and the quest for eternal life. The bonkers case of Laurence Pilgeram and his frozen head is just the start of their investigation. *Hollie Richardson*

Sport

Premiership Rugby Union
Leicester Tigers v Gloucester
Christmas Eve, 2.30pm, BT Sport 1
A league match at Mattioli Woods Welford Road Stadium.

Premier League Football
Brentford v Tottenham
Boxing Day, 12.30pm, Prime Video
The top-flight division resumes, with Crystal Palace v Fulham, Everton v Wolves, Leicester v Newcastle and Southampton v Brighton at 3pm, then Aston Villa v Liverpool at 5.30pm and Arsenal v West Ham at 8pm.

Racing
Kempton Park
Boxing Day, 12.30pm, ITV1
Including the Grade 1 King George VI Chase at 2.30pm.

Rugby Union
Harlequins v Bristol Bears
Tue, 3.45pm, ITV1
From Twickenham Stoop.

Premier League Football
Chelsea v Bournemouth
Tue, 5.30pm, Prime Video
At Stamford Bridge. Followed by Man United v Nottingham Forest at Old Trafford at 8pm.

Alpine Skiing
Tue, 8.45am, Eurosport 1
The women's giant slalom on day one of the World Cup meeting at Semmering, Austria.

Premier League Football
Leeds v Man City
Wed, 8pm, Prime Video
City's Kalvin Phillips (pictured) returns to Elland Road.

Rugby Union
Sale Sharks v Leicester Tigers
Fri, 7pm, BT Sport 1
The sides play their final game of 2022 at AJ Bell Stadium.

AMANDA BENSON/BBC; GRAEME ROBERTSON/THE GUARDIAN

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The Snowman, Channel4

Christmas Eve

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.55** Saturday Kitchen (T) **11.25** Mary Berry's Ultimate Christmas (T) (R) **12.25** News and Weather (T) **12.40** The Farmer's Llamas (T) (R) **1.05** Shaun the Sheep: The Flight Before Christmas (T) (R) **1.40** FILM The Secret Life of Pets 2 (2019) (T) **3.0** FILM Pokemon Detective Pikachu (2019) (T) **4.35** News (T) **4.45** Local News and Weather (T) **4.55** **The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse** (T) **5.25** FILM The Nutcracker and the Four Realms (2018) (T) **7.0** **His Dark Materials** (T)

8.0 **Blankety Blank Christmas Special** (T) With Jonathan Ross, Joanna Lumley, Alex Horne and Guz Khan.
8.35 **I Can See Your Voice** (T) Paddy McGuinness hosts with guest Layton Williams.
9.40 **That's My Jam** (T) Nicole Scherzinger and Thom Evans take on Joey Fatone and Aloe Blacc in the music challenge.

10.40 **Not Going Out** (T) (R) Lee is not happy that Lucy has booked panto tickets.
11.20 **News** (T) Weather
11.45 **Midnight Mass from Blackburn Cathedral** (T)
1.0 FILM **La La Land** (Damien Chazelle, 2016) (T) Musical drama, starring Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling. **3.0** Weather (T) **3.05** News (T)

BBC Two

6.05 **Heaven Made at Christmas** (T) (R) **7.05** Gardeners' World Winter Specials (T) (R) **8.05** Countryfile (T) (R) **8.55** Inside the Christmas Factory (T) (R) **9.55** FILM King of Kings (Nicholas Ray, 1961) (T) **12.25** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.55** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **1.40** FILM North By Northwest (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959) (T) **3.55** Charlie Mackesy: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, the Horse and Me (T) **4.55** FILM Chariots of Fire (Hugh Hudson, 1981) (T) **6.55** Carols from King's (T)

8.10 **Dad's Army** (T) (R) Captain Mainwaring organises a Christmas treat for the old folk of Walmington-on-Sea.
8.40 **Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Christmas Fishing 2022** (T) Bob and Paul take a festive fishing trip to Norway and the Arctic Circle.
9.40 **The Fast Show: Christmas Special** (T) (R) From 1996.

10.25 **Christmas Night With the Two Ronnies 1987** (T) (R)
10.40 **Top of the Pops: Review of the Year 2022** (T)
11.40 **Absolutely Fabulous** (T) (R)
12.15 **Absolutely Champers** (T) (R) **1.15** Top of the Pops (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Lost at Christmas (2020) (T) **3.50** Sign Zone: My Life at Christmas With Sally Phillips (T) (R)

ITV1

6.0 **CITV** **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning at Christmas (T) **11.35** John and Lisa's Christmas Kitchen (T) **12.35** News and Weather (T) **12.45** FILM Arthur Christmas (Barry Cook, Sarah Smith, 2011) (T) **2.35** FILM Santa Claus: The Movie (Jeannot Szwarc, 1985) (T) **4.45** News and Weather (T) **5.0** Local News and Weather (T) **5.15** In for a Christmas Penny (T) **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase Christmas Special (T) **7.0** Royal Carols: Together at Christmas (T)

8.05 **Britain Get Singing** (T) Roman Kemp hosts as groups of stars from Love Island, The Chase, Loose Women, Emmerdale and Coronation Street go head to head in a vocal contest in front of a studio audience and judges.
9.20 **It'll Be Alright on the Night** (T) A selection of mistakes, clangers and outtakes.

10.20 **News** (T) Weather
10.40 **Christmas Comedy Club With Lost Voice Guy** (T) With Paul Zerdin, Josie Long, Dara Ó Briain and Abandoman.
11.40 **Christmas Carols on ITV** (T) Hosted by Jane McDonald.
12.45 FILM **The Holiday** (2006) (T) **3.0** Gino's Italian Family Adventure (R) **3.25** Christmas Kitchen (R) **4.20** CITV

Channel 4

6.05 FILM **Rugrats Go Wild** (2003) **7.25** The Snowman (R) **7.50** The Snowman and the Snowdog (R) **8.25** Father Christmas (R) **9.0** Terry Pratchett's The Abominable Snow Baby (R) **9.25** The Tiger Who Came to Tea (R) **10.0** Shrek the Halls (R) **10.30** The Simpsons (R) **11.30** FILM How to Train Your Dragon (2010) **1.25** FILM **It's a Wonderful Life** (1946) **4.0** The Snowman (R) **4.35** The Snowman and the Snowdog (R) **5.05** News **5.25** FILM Home Alone (1990) **7.25** Celebrity Lego Masters

8.25 **The Great Christmas Bake Off 2022** (T) With Gaby Roslin, Tony Robinson, Miquita Oliver and Terry Christian.
9.40 **Celebrity I Literally Just Told You With Jimmy Carr** (T) Dermot O'Leary, Judi Love, Kerry Katona and David Walliams take part in the gameshow where questions are written live.

10.40 FILM **Four Weddings and a Funeral** (1994) (T) Comedy.
12.55 **First Dates at Christmas** (T) (R) **1.50** The Last Leg Christmas Bash (T) (R) **2.45** Celebrity Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **3.45** Handmade Christmas (T) (R) **4.40** Food Unwrapped (T) (R) **5.05** The Snowman: The Film That Changed Christmas (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **10.0** SpongeBob SquarePants (T) (R) **10.25** Entertainment News (T) **10.30** NFL End Zone (T) **11.0** Friends (T) (R) **11.30** FILM Scrooge: A Christmas Carol (1951) (T) **1.25** FILM Planes, Trains and Automobiles (John Hughes, 1987) (T) **3.15** FILM Pearl Harbor (Michael Bay, 2001) (T) **6.35** Harrods at Christmas (T) (R) **7.35** World's Most Expensive Christmas Cruise (T)

8.35 **Comedy Classic: The Vicar of Dibley** (T) Documentary celebrating Richard Curtis's much-loved BBC sitcom, featuring clips along with insight and analysis from cast, crew and celebrity fans.

10.05 **Britain's Favourite TV Comedy** (T) (R) A rundown hosted by Jo Brand.
11.55 **World's Funniest TV Ads With Jason Manford** (T) (R)
1.0 **The Live Casino Show** (T) **3.0** Entertainment News (T) **3.10** Secret Scotland With Susan Calman (T) (R) **4.50** Britain's Favourite Christmas Carol (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **The Two Ronnies: The Studio Recordings** (T) (R) Unedited takes from the sketch show. **7.30** Christmas With Val Doonican (T) (R) With guests Jan Leeming, Evelyn Glennie and Dennis Taylor.

8.10 **Christmas: The Classical Collection** (T) A ride through seven decades of festive music on the BBC.
9.10 **The Organ Stops: Saving the King of Instruments** (T) Documentary following the efforts of enthusiasts to save, restore and rehome rare pipe organs that would otherwise be destroyed.

10.10 FILM **Their Finest** (Lone Scherfig, 2016) (T) A female scriptwriter joins the crew of a major production during the blitz. Comedy-drama, starring Gemma Arterton.
12.0 **The Last Igloo** (T) (R) **1.30** What We Were Watching (T) (R) **2.30** Christmas With Val Doonican (T) (R) **3.10** Some Santas With Jokes (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm EastEnders **9.0** FILM Last Christmas (2019) **10.35** Bad Education Christmas Special **11.05** PRU **12.45** Bad Education Christmas Special **1.15** Bad Education: Reunion Special **2.0** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice **2.45** Eating With My Ex **3.15** Lazy Susan **3.30** Bad Education Christmas Special

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.0** Yianni: Supercar Customiser **7.35** Eddie Eats Christmas **8.0** Rick Stein's Cornish Christmas **9.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **10.20** Top Gear USA Special **11.20** Top Gear Africa Special **2.0** Red Bull Soapbox Race: London 2022 **4.0** Taskmaster **5.0** Taskmaster **6.0** QI XL **7.0** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Hong Kong **8.0** QI XL **9.0** Gavin & Stacey **10.20** QI **11.0** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas **12.20** Outsiders **1.20** QI XL **2.30** Hypothetical **3.15** Not Going Out **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Made in Chelsea **6.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.55** Modern Family **12.55** The Big Bang Theory **5.50** The Great Christmas Bake Off **7.10** FILM Deck the Halls (2006) **9.0** Gogglebox Festive Special **10.35** Gogglebox **11.40** The Inbetweeners **2.45** Gogglebox Festive Special **4.05** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA

Film4

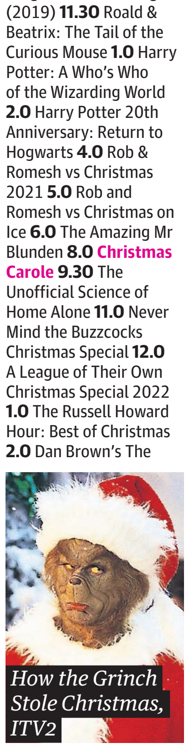
11.0am FILM Miracle on 34th Street (1994) Christmas family drama, starring Richard Attenborough. **1.15** FILM Ice Age: Collision Course (2016) Animated sequel, with the voice of Ray Romano. **3.05** FILM Shrek 2 (2004) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers. **4.50** FILM Addams Family Values (1993) Comedy sequel, starring Anjelica Huston and Raul Julia. **6.45** FILM Bumblebee (2018) Transformers prequel, starring Hailee Steinfeld. **9.0** FILM Terminator: Dark Fate (2019) Sci-fi thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton. **11.35** FILM Ready Or Not (2019) Comedy horror, starring Samara Weaving. **1.25** FILM Airplane! (1980) Spoof disaster movie, starring Robert Hays and Leslie Nielsen.

ITV2

6.0am Unwind With ITV **6.20** Coronation Street Omnibus **9.05** Family Fortunes **10.05** FILM A Cinderella Story: Christmas Wish (2019) **11.55** FILM Nativity Rocks! (2018) **2.05** Donkey's Carolling Christmas-Tacular **2.15** The Madagascar Penguins in a Christmas Caper **2.30** FILM Penguins of Madagascar (2014) **4.15** Catchphrase Christmas Special **5.15** FILM Ice Age (2002) **7.0** FILM How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000) **9.0** Gordon, Gino & Fred: Desperately Seeking Santa **10.15** Family Guy **11.40** American Dad! **12.15** American Dad! **12.40** Christmas Shopping With Keith Lemon **1.40** The Stand Up Sketch Show Christmas Special **2.05** The Stand Up Sketch Show **3.05** All Star Dance Off **3.30** Take Me Out **4.40** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **5.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records Christmas Special **5.30** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

6.0am Bondi Rescue **6.30** Football's Funniest Moments **7.30** There's Something About Christmas Movies **8.30** Red Riding Hood: After Ever After **9.30** The Unofficial Science of Home Alone **11.0** FILM How to Train Your Dragon: Homecoming (2019) **11.30** Roald & Beatrix: The Tail of the Curious Mouse **1.0** Harry Potter: A Who's Who of the Wizarding World **2.0** Harry Potter 20th Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts **4.0** Rob & Romesh vs Christmas 2021 **5.0** Rob and Romesh vs Christmas on Ice **6.0** The Amazing Mr Blunden **8.0** **Christmas Carole** **9.30** The Unofficial Science of Home Alone **11.0** Never Mind the Buzzcocks Christmas Special **12.0** A League of Their Own Christmas Special 2022 **1.0** The Russell Howard Hour: Best of Christmas **2.0** Dan Brown's The Lost Symbol **3.0** Dan Brown's The Lost Symbol **4.0** Sport's Funniest Moments



How the Grinch Stole Christmas, ITV2

Sky Arts

6.0am Arts Uncovered **6.10** André Rieu: Welcome to My World **7.10** FILM Jesus Christ Superstar: Live in Concert (2018) **9.0** Cirque Du Soleil: Kooza **11.0** Wonderland: The Story of Christmas **12.0** The Mystery of the Nativity **1.0** FILM Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (1999) **2.40** André Rieu: Dreaming **4.10** The Nation's Favourite Christmas Carols **6.10** Johnny Cash Live at Montreux **7.30** The Music of Buddy Holly **9.30** Christmas in Ireland With Imelda May **10.45** Portrait Artist of the Year 2022: Christmas Celebrity Special **11.45** The Moody Blues: Days of Future Passed **1.30** Berlin Live: The Damned **2.50** Jeff Lynne's ELO: Wembley Or Bust **5.30** Music Icons: British R&B

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Urban Secrets **8.0** Game of Thrones **2.25** Mare of Easttown **3.30** I Hate Suzie Too **4.35** In Treatment **5.05** Storm City

Radio

Radio 3

7.0am Breakfast **9.0** Record Review. Tom Service's favourite recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. **11.30** The BalletBoyz Guide to Music and Dance. Michael Nunn and Billy Trevitt reveal the music that has inspired them. **1.0** **Inside Music** Choirmaster Gareth Malone's selection. **3.0** Christmas Eve Live With Sarah Walker. The ways Christmas Eve is marked in France, Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Spain and Ukraine. **6.0** Christmas Cantata. A 1971 performance of Honegger's Une cantate de Noël by the French National Radio Orchestra. **6.30** Opera on 3. English National Opera's staging of Gilbert and Sullivan's The Yeomen of the Guard at the London Coliseum. Featuring Anthony Gregory (tenor: Colonel Fairfax), Neal Davies (bass-baritone: Sergeant Meryll of the Yeomen), Heather Lowe (mezzo: Phoebe, his daughter) and Richard McCabe (actor: Jack Point), and the ENO Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Chris Hopkins. **9.30** Slow Radio: The Reindeer. Soundscape following the travels of a female reindeer and its young. **10.0** New Music Show **12.0** Freeness **1.0** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am News and Papers **6.07** Open Country (R) **6.30** Farming Today This Week **7.0** Today **9.0** Saturday Live. With guest Matt Goss. **10.30** Soul Music. Responses to I Believe In Father Christmas by Greg Lake. (6/6) **11.0** The Week in Westminster **11.30** From Our Own Correspondent **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** Money Box **12.30** Dead Ringers (R) **1.0** News **1.10** News Review of the Year (R) **2.0** Neil Gaiman's The Sleeper and the Spindle. Christmas-time fairytale, starring Penelope Wilton. (R) **3.0** A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Live from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. **4.30** You're Dead to Me. What Christmas was like with Charles Dickens. **5.0** Saturday PM **5.30** Now You're Asking With Marian Keyes and Tara Flynn. Christmas crises. **5.54** Shipping Forecast **6.0** News **6.15** Loose Ends. Clive Anderson is joined by Cerys Matthews and the Gwalia Male Choir, Brian Bilston, Imelda May, Salena Godden, Luke Wright, Polarbear and Her & Her. With music from Judy Collins and John Shuttleworth. **7.0** Profile **7.15** The Infinite Monkey Cage. Brian Cox and Robin Ince are joined by Tim Minchin at the Australian Wine Research Institute in Adelaide to find out what science can teach us about wine. (7/7) **8.0** 'Twas the Night Before Christmas: The Poem That Changed the World. Luke Wright examines the lasting influence of the Christmas poem. **9.0** With Great Pleasure at Christmas. Michael Rosen chooses poems and stories. **10.0** News **10.15** Hunting Ghosts With Gatiss and Coles. Mark Gatiss and Richard Coles explore the most haunted parish in England. **11.0** Nature Table (R) **11.30** Midnight Mass. Live from Leeds Cathedral. **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Bells on Sunday **5.45** Profile (R)

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am The Nutcracker Christmas **7.30** Telling Tales **8.30** The Night the Animals Talked **9.0** Life With the Lyons **9.30** Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves (3/6) **10.0** Sue Perkins' Christmas Comedy Stocking (3/3) **11.0** The Nutcracker Christmas **12.30** Telling Tales **1.30** The Night the Animals Talked **2.0** Life With the Lyons **2.30** Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves (3/6) **3.0** Sue Perkins' Christmas Comedy Stocking (3/3) **4.0** Doctor Who: The War Doctor (2/12) **5.0** The Nutcracker Christmas **6.30** Telling Tales **7.30** The Night the Animals Talked **8.0** Life With the Lyons **8.30** Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves (3/6) **9.0** Sue Perkins' Christmas Comedy Stocking (3/3) **10.0** John Finnemore's Souvenir Programme (3/6) **10.30** Britain in Bits With Ross Noble (1/4) **11.0** Danny Robins Music Therapy (4/4) **11.30** Radio Shuttleworth (4/6) **12.0** Mystery Playhouse: Blind Man's Hood **12.30** The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton **12.45** Absent Friends: The 7th Dimension **1.0** The Nutcracker Christmas **2.30** Telling Tales **3.30** The Night the Animals Talked **4.0** Life With the Lyons **4.30** Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves (3/6) **5.0** Sue Perkins' Christmas Comedy Stocking (3/3)

Christmas Day

Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special, BBC One

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.0** The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse (T) (R) **9.30** Superworm (T) (R) **10.0** Christmas Day Eucharist (T) **11.0** Songs of Praise (T) **11.35** FILM Abominable (2019) (T) **1.0** FILM A Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmageddon (2019) (T) **2.20** News (T) **2.30** **The Smeds and the Smoos** (T) **3.0** The King (T) **3.10** FILM **Aladdin** (2019) (T) **5.10** **Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special** (T) **6.25** Michael McIntyre's Christmas Wheel (T) **7.25** **Ghosts Christmas Special** (T)

7.55 **Call the Midwife** (T) The midwives treat a heavily pregnant ex-convict and a woman whose last baby was affected by thalidomide. Fred plans a fundraising talent show for those affected by a train crash.
9.25 **EastEnders** (T) A vicious row ensues at the Vic over Christmas dinner.

10.25 **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** (T) Cathy's boyfriend is initiated into the family.
10.55 **News** (T) Weather
11.15 **On Christmas Night** (T) Oti Mabuse reads the story of the first Christmas.
11.20 **The Vicar of Dibley** (T) (R)
12.05 FILM **When Harry Met Sally** (1989) (T) **1.35** Weather (T) **1.40** News (T)

BBC Two

6.20 **Heaven Made at Christmas** (T) (R) **7.15** Carols from King's (T) (R) **8.30** Saturday Kitchen Christmas Best Bites (T) **10.0** A Close Shave (T) (R) **10.35** The Wrong Trousers (T) (R) **11.05** A Matter of Loaf and Death (T) (R) **11.35** FILM White Christmas (1954) (T) **1.30** **Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker!** (T) **3.0** Sign Zone: The King (T) **3.10** FILM **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes** (1953) (T) **4.40** FILM Some Like It Hot (1959) (T) **6.35** Dad's Army (R) **7.15** The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show 1972 (R)

8.25 **Tina Turner at the BBC** (T) (R) Archive footage of the singer's performances.
9.25 **When Tina Turner Came to Britain** (T) Documentary chronicling the singer's 50-year relationship with the UK, featuring interviews with Turner herself, and contributions from those who have worked with her.

10.25 **Tina Live!** (T) (R) From 2009.
12.40 FILM **What's Love Got to Do With It** (1993) (T) Tina Turner biopic. **2.30** Sign Zone: Stacey Solomon's Crafty Christmas (T) (R) **3.30** The Great British Sewing Bee: Celebrity Christmas Special (T) (R) **4.30** Cats & Michaela: Under the Christmas Sky (T) (R) **5.30** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 CITV **6.35** FILM The Madagascar Penguins in a Christmas Caper (2005) **6.50** FILM Donkey's Carolling Christmas-Tacular (2010) **7.0** Good Morning Britain **9.0** Lorraine **10.0** This Morning **12.0** James Martin's Christmas Day **2.0** Ainsley's Festive Flavours **3.0** The King **3.10** Alan Carr's Epic Gameshow (R) **4.10** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway Presents: Polter Guys **4.45** News **5.0** The Chase Celebrity Christmas Special **6.0** Emmerdale **7.0** Coronation Street

8.0 **Ant & Dec's Christmas Limitless Win** (T) Celebrity pairs Rylan and David Walliams, and Jimmy Carr and Katherine Ryan take on the money ladder.
9.05 **Doc Martin Christmas Special** (T) The grumpy GP has the grotto closed down because Father Christmas has an itch that might be contagious.

10.35 **News** (T) Weather
10.45 **The King** (T) (R)
11.0 FILM **Love Actually** (Richard Curtis, 2003) (T) Romantic comedy, starring Hugh Grant.
1.20 **The Royal Variety Performance 2022** (T) (R) **3.30** Motorsport UK (T) (R) **4.20** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Coronation Street at Christmas (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.0 **The Simpsons** (T) (R) **7.40** FILM Rise of the Guardians (Peter Ramsey, 2012) (T) **9.35** FILM Kung Fu Panda 2 (Jennifer Yuh, 2011) (T) **11.25** The Snowman (T) (R) **11.55** The Snowman and the Snowdog (T) (R) **12.30** The Great Christmas Bake Off 2022 (T) (R) **1.50** FILM The Great Escape (1963) (T) **5.15** News (T) **5.25** The Alternative Christmas Message (T) **5.30** FILM **Home Alone 2: Lost in New York** (Chris Columbus, 1992) (T)

7.50 **The Great Festive Pottery Throw Down** (T) James Fleet, Jenny Eclair, Jamie Laing and Sunetra Sarker get their hands dirty in the hope of becoming the show's first festive champion.
9.05 **Gogglebox 2022** (T) Memorable moments featured on the show over the course of 2022.

10.55 FILM **Catch Me If You Can** (Steven Spielberg, 2002) (T) Fact-based drama.
1.30 FILM **East Is East** (Damien O'Donnell, 1999) (T) **3.10** The Alternative Christmas Message (T) (R) **3.15** Food Unwrapped Gets Chocolatey (T) (R) **3.40** Come Dine With Me Christmas (T) (R) **5.55** The Simpsons (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **8.35** Britain's Favourite 90s Toys (T) (R) **9.20** Greatest Family Christmas Hits (T) (R) **10.15** Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs (T) (R) **1.10** Britain's Favourite 80s Songs (T) (R) **3.10** The Canterville Ghost (T) **5.10** Jane McDonald's Highland Christmas (T) (R)

6.25 **Britain's Favourite 90s Songs** (T) Chart countdown celebrating the biggest-selling singles of the decade.
9.25 **The Best Christmas Day Telly Ever!** (T) (R) A look at what makes the perfect Christmas Day viewing schedule, with Ricky Tomlinson, Sonny Jay, Debbie McGee and Sian Welby.

11.20 **Britain's Favourite Party Hits** (R) A celebration of the best-loved dance records from the past 50 years, featuring the likes of the Macarena, Vogue and Agadoo.
1.15 **The Live Casino Show** (T) **3.15** Christmas With Mariah Carey (T) (R) **4.0** Before They Were Stars (T) (R) **5.35** House Doctor (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story** (T) Mark Gatiss stars as Jacob Marley in his own stage adaptation of the classic Dickens tale.

8.45 **A Musical Family Christmas With the Kanneh-Masons** (T) (R) A festive treat with the musical siblings.
9.45 **Sheku Kanneh-Mason: The Classical Collection** (T) Performances that showcase cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason's journey from teenage virtuoso to a leading light of the classical world.

10.45 **Victoria Wood: The Secret List** (T) (R) Favourite sketches chosen by the comedian in a notebook discovered after her death.
11.45 **Victoria Wood: The Secret List** (T) (R) Part two of two.
12.45 **Dinnerladies** (T) (R) **1.20** The Two Ronnies: The Studio Recordings (T) (R) **1.50** TOTP: Christmas Hits (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm Celebrity MasterChef Christmas Cook-Off **8.0** Gavin & Stacey **9.0** Canada's Drag Race: Canada vs the World **10.0** Cuckoo Christmas Special **10.35** Wreck **11.20** Wreck **12.05** Gavin & Stacey **1.05** Cuckoo Christmas Special **1.40** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice **2.25** Gavin & Stacey **3.25** Cuckoo Christmas Special

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.30** Celebrity Storage Hunters **8.20** Rick Stein's Cornwall **8.50** Rick Stein's Far Eastern Odyssey **9.50** Top Gear: From A-Z **12.20** Top Gear Nepal Special **2.0** Top Gear: Driving Home for Christmas **3.0** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Hong Kong **4.0** Taskmaster **6.0** QI XL **7.0** Travel Man: 96 Hours in Jordan **8.0** QI XL **9.0** Gavin & Stacey **10.25** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas **11.0** Mock the Week End of Year Special **11.40** QI Christmas Special: Seasons Greetings **12.20** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas **1.0** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas **1.40** Taskmaster **2.30** Live at the Moth Club **3.30** Not Going Out **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Extreme Cake Makers **6.15** The Big Bang Theory **8.25** Celebrity Christmas Come Dine With Me **11.0** Married at First Sight UK: Christmas Reunion **12.30** FILM Kindergarten Cop (1990) **2.40** Shrek the Halls **3.15** Father Christmas **3.55** The Tiger Who Came to Tea **4.25** We're Going on a Bear Hunt **5.0** Terry Pratchett's The Abominable Snow Baby **5.35** Quentin Blake's Clown **6.0** The Snowman **6.40** The Snowman and the Snowdog **7.15** FILM Johnny English Strikes Again (2018) **9.0** FILM The Inbetweeners Movie (2011) **10.55** The Inbetweeners **2.25** Gogglebox **3.20** Hollyoaks Omnibus

Film4

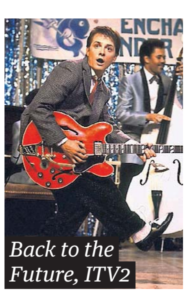
11.0am FILM Shrek the Third (2007) Animated sequel. **12.50** FILM Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (2008) Animated comedy sequel. **2.35** FILM Jingle All the Way (1996) Comedy. **4.20** FILM The Kid Who Would Be King (2019) Fantasy adventure, starring Louis Ashbourne Serkis. **6.45** FILM **Grease** (1978) Romantic musical. **9.0** FILM Venom (2018) Fantasy adventure, starring Tom Hardy. **11.10** FILM Step Brothers (2008) Comedy, starring Will Ferrell and John C Reilly. **1.10** FILM Last Action Hero (1993) Comedy adventure, with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

ITV2

6.0am Unwind With ITV **6.10** In for a Christmas Penny **7.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **8.0** FILM Beethoven's Christmas Adventure (2011) **9.50** Merry Madagascar **10.25** Trolls Holiday **10.50** FILM It's a Very Merry Muppet Christmas Movie (2002) **12.35** Kung Fu Panda Holiday **1.10** FILM Peter Pan (2003) **3.25** FILM E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (1982) **5.45** FILM Back to the Future (1985) **8.0** FILM Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again (2018) **10.25** Gordon, Gino and Fred: Christmas Road Trip – Three Unwise Men **11.25** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.10** American Dad! **1.40** Celebrity Juice Christmas Special **2.30** The Stand Up Sketch Show **3.25** Shopping With Keith Lemon **3.50** Take Me Out **4.55** Secret Crush **5.45** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

6.0am The 80s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **7.0** Dating No Filter **8.0** Football's Funniest Moments **10.0** It's Christmas Live from the Royal Albert Hall **11.30** The Amazing Mr Blunden **1.30** The Unofficial Science of Home Alone **3.0** Hansel & Gretel: After Ever After **4.0** Red Riding Hood: After Ever After **5.0** Agatha Raisin **7.0** Christmas Carole **8.30** Rob and Romesh vs Christmas on Ice **9.30** The Christmas Movie Countdown **10.30** The Russell Howard Hour: Best of Christmas **11.30** Never Mind the Buzzcocks Christmas Special **12.30** A League of Their Own Christmas Special 2022 **1.30** Never Mind the Buzzcocks Christmas Special **2.30** Rob & Romesh vs Christmas 2021 **3.30** A League of Their Own: Christmas Special 2021 **4.25** We're Here **5.35** Road Wars



Back to the Future, ITV2

Sky Arts

6.0am Tchaikovsky, Swan Lake **8.30** Tales of the Unexpected **9.0** Cirque Du Soleil: Mystery of Mystère **10.20** FILM Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (1999) **12.0** Portrait Artist of the Year 2022: Christmas Celebrity Special **1.0** Peter Pan Live **3.40** The Eagles: Live from the LA Forum **6.35** FILM Elvis on Tour (1972) **8.15** FILM Elvis: That's the Way It Is (1970) **10.0** Elvis '56 Special **11.20** Elvis Presley: A Legend in Concert **12.20** Classic Albums **1.20** Elvis: The Final Hours **2.20** Christmas in Ireland With Imelda May **3.35** The Ronnie Wood Show **4.35** Isle of Wight Festival Greatest Hits **5.0** Cheltenham Literature Festival

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Fish Town **8.0** Game of Thrones **9.05** House of the Dragon **9.0** Game of Thrones **1.25** Big Little Lies **2.25** Souls **4.20** Urban Secrets

Radio

Radio 3

7.0am Breakfast **9.0** Christmas Morning Live. With live music by Claire Martin and Jim Mullen, and the Wilderness Yet. **1.0** A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Live from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. **3.0** The Early Music Show. Hannah French celebrates the 40th anniversary of the group Gabrieli. **4.0** Faroe Islands Sound Walk. Horatio Clare travels across the archipelago in the north Atlantic. (1/3) **5.0** Jazz Record Requests **6.0** Words and Music. A Christmas menagerie. **6.45** Sunday Feature: What Walls Hold. Rob Valentine's docudrama about Charles Dickens's time at Tavistock House in London. **7.30** Drama on 3: Benny & Hitch. Andrew McCaldon's tale of Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock, starring Tim McInnerny and Toby Jones. **9.30** Record Review Extra **11.30** Slow Radio: A Sunday Walk Through Harlem. A stroll around the New York City neighbourhood. **12.0** Classical Fix Christmas Special. Linton Stephens creates a playlist for Blue Peter's Mwaka Mudenda. **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am News **6.05** Something Understood. The angels' message of goodwill at Christmas. (R) **6.35** Natural Histories (R) **6.57** Weather **7.0** Christmas Service. From Bath Abbey. **7.56** Radio 4 Appeal: Dogs for Good **8.0** Paddy's Christmas Cracker **10.0** The Archers (R) **11.15** **Desert Island Discs** With former host Kirsty Young. (14/15) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue (R) **12.30** The Food Programme. Sheila Dillon invites Delia Smith into her kitchen for Christmas. **12.57** Weather **1.0** News **1.15** The Infinite Monkey Cage (R) **2.0** Gardeners' Question Time (R) **2.45** Just William: The Great Performer. By Richmal Crompton. (R) **3.0** HM the King **3.05** News **3.15** **The Signalman** Jonathan Holloway's adaptation of Charles Dickens's ghost story. **4.15** Hunting Ghosts With Gatiss and Coles (R) **5.0** Christmas Recycled **5.40** Profile (R) **5.54** Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.15** Pick of the Week **7.0** The Archers **7.15** The Confessional. Stephen Mangan is joined by actor Sheila Hancock. (3/6) **7.45** Voices in the Valley. A Celestial Event, by Andrew Michael Hurley. (9/10) **8.0** Soul Music (R) **8.30** You're Dead to Me (R) **9.0** Money Box (R) **9.30** Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening. Michael Symmons Roberts explores Robert Frost's poem. **10.0** Loose Ends (R) **10.45** Excuse Me, Are You John Shuttleworth? (R) **11.0** Poetry Please. Roger Robinson and Liz Lochhead join Roger McGough to share seasonal poems. **11.30** Something Understood (R) **12.0** News **12.15** Christmas Meditation. A reflection with Adjoa Andoh. **12.30** Short Works. The Wood at Midwinter, by Susanna Clarke. (R) **12.45** Bells on Sunday (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Poetry Extra **6.30** A Maigret Christmas Omnibus (1-5/5) **7.40** Inheritance Tracks **7.50** Highlites: Split Ends Omnibus **9.0** Stilgoe's Around **9.30** Something to Shout About (6/21) **10.0** Desert Island Discs **10.30** A Christmas Story **11.0** Poetry Extra **11.30** A Maigret Christmas Omnibus (1-5/5) **12.40** Inheritance Tracks **12.50** Highlites: Split Ends Omnibus **2.0** Stilgoe's Around **2.30** Something to Shout About (6/21) **3.0** Desert Island Discs **3.30** A Christmas Story **4.0** Mystery Playhouse: Blind Man's Hood **4.30** The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton **4.45** Absent Friends: The 7th Dimension **5.0** Poetry Extra **5.30** A Maigret Christmas Omnibus (1-5/5) **6.40** Inheritance Tracks **6.50** Highlites: Split Ends Omnibus **8.0** Stilgoe's Around **8.30** Something to Shout About (6/21) **9.0** Desert Island Discs **9.30** A Christmas Story **10.0** Electric Ink (3/6) **10.30** Party **11.0** Old Harry's Game Christmas Special 2022 (2/2) **11.30** 4 At the Store (1/4) **12.0** Poetry Extra **12.30** A Maigret Christmas Omnibus (1-5/5) **1.40** Inheritance Tracks **1.50** Highlites: Split Ends Omnibus **3.0** Stilgoe's Around **3.30** Something to Shout About (6/21) **4.0** Desert Island Discs **4.30** A Christmas Story **5.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (1/2)

Boxing Day

The Repair Shop Christmas Special, BBC One

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.0** The Smeds and the Smoos (T) (R) **9.30** The Snail and the Whale (T) (R) **9.55** The Gruffalo's Child (T) (R) **10.25** FILM Big Hero 6 (2014) (T) **12.0** News (T) **12.15** Regional News and Weather (T) **12.25** FILM Frozen (2013) (T) **2.0** The Gruffalo (T) (R) **2.25** FILM **Mary Poppins** (1964) (T) **4.40** FILM Ghostbusters (1984) (T) **6.20** News (T) **6.35** Regional News and Weather (T) **6.45** The Weakest Link (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **The Repair Shop Christmas Special** The team fix four festive items: a 1960s home bar, a bedraggled tree, an old film projector and a battered trombone.

9.0 **Death in Paradise Christmas Special** (T) Christmas in Saint Marie is interrupted by the murder of a podcaster on the hunt for a missing child.

10.30 News (T) Weather
10.50 **Match of the Day** (T) Arsenal v West Ham and Leicester v Newcastle.
12.15 FILM **Mrs Brown's Boys D'Movie** (Ben Kellett, 2014) (T) Comedy, starring Brendan O'Carroll. **1.45** Have I Got 2021 News for You (T) (R) **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead (T) **2.20** News (T)

BBC Two

6.15 FILM **Aladdin** (Guy Ritchie, 2019) (T) **8.15** Charles Dickens and the Invention of Christmas (T) (R) **9.15** FILM Great Expectations (David Lean, 1946) (T) **11.10** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **11.55** Great British Railway Journeys (T) (R) **12.25** FILM Escape to Athena (George Pan Cosmatos, 1979) (T) **2.20** FILM The Heroes of Telemark (Anthony Mann, 1965) (T) **4.30** Final Score (T) **5.30** FILM The Magnificent Seven (John Sturges, 1960) (T) **7.30** Richard Osman's Festive House of Games (T)

8.0 **Only Connect Specials: Mystery** (T) Quizshow.

8.30 **Christmas University Challenge** (T) UCL takes on Aberdeen to secure a place in the semi-finals.

9.0 **Detectorists Special** (T) Lance breaks protocol when a relic is unearthed, threatening his friendship with Andy – and the club.

10.15 FILM **Goodfellas** (Martin Scorsese, 1990) (T) Crime drama, starring Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci.
12.35 **The Love Box in Your Living Room** (R) **1.35** Sign Zone: The Best Christmas Food Ever (R) **2.20** Countryfile (R) **3.15** Strictly Come Dancing (R) **4.30** Iolo's Anglesey (R) **5.0** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **CITV** **9.25** Love Your Weekend With Alan Titchmarsh at Christmas (T) **11.20** Ainsley's Festive Flavours (T) (R) **12.20** News and Weather (T) **12.30** Racing: Live from Kempton (T) **3.10** In for a Penny (T) (R) **3.45** FILM **The Mitchells vs the Machines** (Jeff Rowe, Michael Rianda, 2021) (T) **5.45** News and Weather (T) **6.0** The Chase Celebrity Christmas Special (T) **7.0** Emmerdale (T) **7.30** Coronation Street (T)

8.30 **The Voice Kids** (T) New series. Ronan Keating joins will.i.am, Danny Jones and Pixie Lott on the judging panel as the junior talent search returns, with more youngsters displaying their musical gifts. Continues tomorrow.

10.0 **News** (T) Weather
10.15 **Des O'Connor: The Ultimate Entertainer** (T) (R) A tribute to the longest-serving primetime TV host.
11.10 **English Football League Highlights** (T) (R)
1.0 **Shop: Ideal World 3.0** Cooking With the Stars (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** The Cube (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.20 **The Simpsons** (T) (R) **7.35** FILM Hotel for Dogs (Thor Freudenthal, 2009) (T) **9.30** Christmas Brunch (T) **12.30** The Simpsons (T) (R) **2.20** A Place in the Sun (T) **3.25** Five Star Christmas: Inside Corinthia (T) (R) **4.25** The Great Festive Pottery Throw Down (T) (R) **5.40** News (T) **5.55** FILM Peter Rabbit (Will Gluck, 2018) (T)

7.30 **The Greatest Snowman 2022** (T) Sue Perkins returns with the seasonal celebrity snow-sculpture challenge.

9.0 **The Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2022** (T) Hosted by Jimmy Carr, with panellists Stephen Merchant, Katherine Ryan, Richard Ayoade, Maisie Adam, Jonathan Ross and Rose Matafeo.

11.0 **Gogglebox 2022** (T) (R) A round-up of memorable moments from this year.
12.55 FILM **Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues** (Adam McKay, 2013) (T) Comedy sequel, starring Will Ferrell. **2.55** Hollyoaks Omnibus (T) (R) **5.0** Sunday Brunch Best Bits (T) (R) **5.15** Grand Designs (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **9.25** Entertainment News (T) **9.35** FILM Breakfast at Tiffany's (Blake Edwards, 1961) (T) **11.50** FILM My Fair Lady (George Cukor, 1964) (T) **3.0** The Canterville Ghost (T) **5.0** FILM Calendar Girls (Nigel Cole, 2003) (T) **7.0** World's Strongest Man 2022 (T)

8.0 **Les Dawson: 30 Funniest Moments** (T) (R) A celebration of the comedian's career, featuring shaggy dog stories, classic sketches and his collaborations with stars such as John Cleese, Shirley Bassey and Roy Barraclough.

10.0 **Britain's Favourite Rock Songs** (T) A celebration of the UK's best-selling tracks from the genre, exploring the stories behind each one.
12.0 **The Rolling Stones in Hyde Park Live** (T) (R) **1.0** Live NFL: Indianapolis Colts v Los Angeles Chargers (T) **4.45** Divine Designs (T) (R) **5.10** House Doctor (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Winter Walks** (T) (R) The Rev Richard Coles walks through the North York Moors to Rievaulx Abbey. **7.30** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R) Michael Portillo embarks on a journey through Germany.

8.0 **Royal Institution Christmas Lectures With Dame Sue Black** (T) The forensic scientist is joined by Emilia Fox to explain her methods.

9.0 **Robbie Coltrane at the BBC** (T) A look at his career.

9.45 **Richard Wilson Remembers Tutti Frutti** (T) The actor recalls his role in John Byrne's 1987 TV drama.

10.0 **Tutti Frutti** (T) (R) Double bill of the drama series, starring Robbie Coltrane.
12.0 **The Real Star of Bethlehem: A Sky at Night Christmas Special** (T) (R) **1.0** Hope Street (T) (R) **1.45** Winter Walks (T) (R) **2.15** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R) **2.45** Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm Press X to Continue **7.10** Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers **7.40** FILM The Secret Life of Pets 2 (2019) Animated sequel, featuring Patton Oswalt. **9.0** The Traitors **10.0** The Traitors **11.0** The Traitors **12.05** Bad Education: Reunion Special **12.50** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **1.35** Wreck **3.05** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.25** Expedition With Steve Backshall **8.20** Rick Stein's Spain **9.20** Top Gear: Driving Home for Christmas **10.20** Top Gear Patagonia Special **1.0** Would I Lie to You? **1.40** Would I Lie to You? **2.20** Would I Lie to You? The Unseen Bits **3.0** Travel Man: 96 Hours in Jordan **4.0** Taskmaster **5.0** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Florence **6.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **6.40** QI XL **7.40** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas **8.20** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas **9.0** We Are Not Alone **11.0** Outsiders **12.0** QI XL **1.0** Taskmaster: Champion of Champions **2.0** QI **2.45** Not Going Out **3.15** Question Team **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **6.10** Quentin Blake's Clown **6.35** Terry Pratchett's The Abominable Snow Baby **7.0** Ramsay's Hotel Hell **8.0** Black-ish **9.0** How I Met Your Mother **10.0** The Goldbergs **11.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** FILM Junior (1994) **4.10** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **4.20** Modern Family **5.20** The Big Bang Theory **6.20** FILM The Karate Kid (2010) **9.0** Made in Chelsea: Bonjour Baby **10.0** Gogglebox **11.05** Naked Attraction **12.10** The Inbetweeners **3.25** Summer House **4.15** The Big Bang Theory **5.05** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Film4

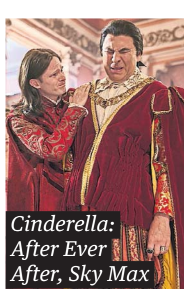
11.0am FILM Shrek Forever After (2010) Animated comedy, with the voice of Mike Myers. **12.50** FILM Puss in Boots (2011) Animated comedy spin-off, with the voice of Antonio Banderas. **2.35** FILM Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief (2010) Fantasy adventure, starring Logan Lerman. **4.50** FILM Sister Act (1992) Comedy, starring Whoopi Goldberg. **6.50** FILM I, Robot (2004) Sci-fi thriller, starring Will Smith. **9.0** FILM Jumanji: The Next Level (2019) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Dwayne Johnson. **11.25** FILM Widows (2018) Thriller, starring Viola Davis. **2.05** FILM Airplane II: The Sequel (1982) Disaster movie spoof, starring Robert Hays.

ITV2

6.0am Unwind With ITV **6.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records Christmas Special **6.40** Catchphrase **7.25** In for a Penny **7.55** In for a Penny **8.20** FILM Cats & Dogs (2001) **10.0** FILM Stuart Little (1999) **11.50** Celebrity Catchphrase Christmas Special **12.50** FILM Ice Age 2: The Meltdown (2006) **2.40** FILM Matilda (1996) **4.45** FILM Madagascar (2005) **6.30** FILM Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom (2018) **9.0** FILM Fast & Furious 8 (2017) **11.40** Family Guy **12.05** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.0** American Dad! **1.30** The Stand Up Sketch Show **2.0** The Stand Up Sketch Show **2.30** All American **4.05** Take Me Out **5.25** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **5.50** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

6.0am FILM How to Train Your Dragon: Homecoming (2019) **6.30** Dr Seuss' The Grinch Musical! **8.0** Harry Potter: A Who's Who of the Wizarding World **9.0** Red Riding Hood: After Ever After **10.0** The 90s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **11.0** Sport's Funniest Moments **12.0** Terry Pratchett's Hogfather **4.0** Cinderella: After Ever After **5.0** Jack & the Beanstalk: After Ever After **6.0** Christmas Carole **7.30** The Unofficial Science of Home Alone **9.0** FILM The Lost City of Z (2016) **11.30** Rob and Romesh vs Christmas on Ice **12.30** Rob & Romesh vs Art **1.25** The Russell Howard Hour: Best of Christmas **2.20** A League of Their Own Christmas Special 2022 **3.15** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **4.10** The 00s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **5.05** Tom Cruise: Movie Maverick


Cinderella: After Ever After, Sky Max

Sky Arts

6.0am Cirque Du Soleil: Alegría **8.0** George Balanchine's The Nutcracker **9.50** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.50** The Mystery of the Nativity **11.50** Kylie Minogue's Infinite Disco **1.0** Annie Live! **3.30** Elvis Presley: A Legend in Concert **4.30** I Am Johnny Cash **6.15** Discovering: Bee Gees **6.45** Bee Gees: One Night Only **9.0** FILM The Bee Gees: How Can You Mend a Broken Heart (2020) **11.0** Bee Gees: In Our Own Time **12.20** Johnny Cash: Live at Montreux **1.40** Peter Gabriel: Growing Up **4.25** Live from the Artists Den **5.35** Music Icons: Pop Rock

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Urban Secrets **7.40** Game of Thrones **8.50** The Fear Index **12.50** The White Lotus **9.0** Game of Thrones **12.15** I Hate Suzie Too **1.20** Ray Donovan **2.20** Mare of Easttown **3.25** The Fear Index **4.30** In Treatment **5.0** Urban Secrets

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: More One Hit Wonders – Amilcare Ponchielli and Charles-Marie Widor **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. The Aris Quartet perform Mendelssohn's String Quartet in D, Op 44, plus works by Schulhoff and Kurtág. (R) **2.0** Afternoon Concert. Cellist Abel Selaocoe joins the BBC SSO for music by Giovanni Sollima and one of his own works. **4.0** Faroe Islands Sound Walk. Horatio Clare continues his journey on the western side of the archipelago. (2/3) **5.0** New Generation Artists **6.15** Words and Music (R) **7.30** Proms at Christmas 2022. Kevin John Edusei conducts Chineke! Chorus and Orchestra, soprano Nicole Cabell, mezzo Raehann Bryce-Davis, tenor Zwakele Tshabalala and bass-baritone Ryan Speedo Green in George Walker's Lilacs and Beethoven's Symphony No 9 in D minor "Choral". **8.50** Ultimate Calm (12/12) **9.50** Proms at Christmas 2022. Public Service Broadcasting celebrate 100 years of BBC radio with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. **11.0** Night Tracks **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** Start the Week. The power of awe. (16/16) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Giving Up the Ghost. By Hilary Mantel. (1/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** With Great Pleasure at Christmas (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** The New Gurus. A group of taboo-breaking intellectual provocateurs who came to light in 2018. (6/8) **12.30** Sliced Bread (R) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Causing a Scene. Antonia Quirke examines the cultural influence of the 1998 movie Sliding Doors. (1/5) **2.0** The Archers **2.15** The Dark Is Rising. Drama based on Susan Cooper's novel. (1/4) (R) **3.0** Nature Table (5/6) **3.30** The Food Programme (R) **4.0** Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening (R) **4.30** Open Book. Agatha Christie's connection to Christmas. **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **6.0** News **6.15** Just William: The Great Performer (R) **6.30** **Just a Minute** (1/8) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Add to Playlist (R) **8.0** The Untold. The story of a five-year-old girl who was non-verbal until she learned to bake. **8.30** Crossing Continents (R) **9.0** Phantoms in the Brain (R) **9.30** Start the Week (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Marple – Three New Stories (6/10) **11.0** Loose Ends Lounge (1/2) **12.0** News **12.15** Wild Bond (R) **12.30** Book of the Week (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Trueman and Riley (1/4) **6.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (1/4) **7.0** Last Christmas (1/5) **7.15** Good News Stories (1/5) **7.30** Dot (4/4) **8.0** Brothers in Law (4/13) **8.30** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful (3/6) **9.0** The Food Quiz **9.30** Son of Santa **10.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (1/2) **11.0** Trueman and Riley (1/4) **11.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (1/4) **12.0** Last Christmas (1/5) **12.15** Good News Stories (1/5) **12.30** Dot (4/4) **1.0** Brothers in Law (4/13) **1.30** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful (3/6) **2.0** The Food Quiz **2.30** Son of Santa **3.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (1/2) **4.0** Trueman and Riley (1/4) **4.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (1/4) **5.0** Last Christmas (1/5) **5.15** Good News Stories (1/5) **5.30** Dot (4/4) **6.0** Brothers in Law (4/13) **6.30** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful (3/6) **7.0** The Food Quiz **7.30** Son of Santa **8.0** Radiolab (4/8) **8.55** Inheritance Tracks **9.0** The Film We Can't See **9.30** And the Academy Award Goes To (2/4) **10.0** I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue (6/6) **10.30** Lucy Montgomery's Variety Pack (1/4) **11.0** Dead Ringers (3/3) **11.30** As Told to Craig Brown (3/6) **12.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (1/2) **1.0** Trueman and Riley (1/4) **1.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (1/4) **2.0** Last Christmas (1/5) **2.15** Good News Stories (1/5) **2.30** Dot (4/4) **3.0** Brothers in Law (4/13) **3.30** Legal, Decent, Honest and Truthful (3/6) **4.0** The Food Quiz **4.30** Son of Santa **5.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (2/2)

Tuesday

E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial, ITV1

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** **7.35** Match of the Day **9.0** Attenborough: 60 Years in the Wild **10.0** FILM Missing Link (2019) **11.30** FILM The NeverEnding Story (1984) **1.0** News **1.15** Regional News **1.25** FILM Trolls Holiday in Harmony (2021) **1.45** FILM How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World (2019) **3.20** FILM How to Train Your Dragon: Homecoming (2019) **3.45** FILM Ghostbusters II (1989) **5.25** Pointless Celebrities (R) **6.15** News **6.35** Regional News **6.45** The Weakest Link

7.30 **EastEnders** (T) Sam tries to convince Phil to give Kat another chance.

8.0 **Countryfile** (T) Margherita Taylor discovers the roots of New Year and Burns' Night.

9.0 FILM **1917** (Sam Mendes, 2019) Two British soldiers cross enemy lines to deliver a message. War drama, starring George MacKay.

10.50 **News** (T)

11.15 **Regional News** (T) Weather

11.20 **Tokyo Vice** (T) Sato questions his life with the yakuza.

12.15 **Tokyo Vice** (T) Samantha risks it all. Last in the series.

1.25 **Blankety Blank Christmas Special** (T) (R) **2.0** The Great British Sewing Bee: Celebrity Christmas Special (T) (R) **3.0** Weather (T) **3.05** News (T)

BBC Two

6.10 FILM **Trolls: World Tour** (2020) (T) **7.35** Snow Babies (T) (R) **8.35** Jay's Yorkshire Workshop (T) (R) **9.35** FILM The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938) (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt: Food and Drink Special (T) (R) **1.0** Great British Railway Journeys (T) (R) **1.30** FILM Hello, Dolly! (Gene Kelly, 1969) (T) **3.50** FILM Funny Girl (William Wyler, 1968) (T) **6.15** **Coppélia** (T) **7.30** Richard Osman's Festive House of Games (T)

8.0 **Only Connect** (T) Part-Time Poets face Romantics.

8.30 **Christmas University Challenge** (T) Bristol takes on Cardiff.

9.0 **Miriam Margolyes: Australia Unmasked** (T) The actor embarks on a journey to explore the Australian ethos of "the fair go", and how it works for its citizens.

10.0 **Frankie Boyle's 2022 New World Order** (T)

10.45 **QI XL** (T) Sandi Toksvig hosts.

11.30 **Lady Gaga at the BBC** (T) (R)

12.30 **Pride Hits at the BBC** (T) (R) **1.30** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World Winter Specials (T) (R) **2.30** The Best Christmas Food Ever (T) (R) **3.15** How to With John Wilson (T) (R) **4.15** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 CITV **9.25** FILM Over the Hedge (Karey Kirkpatrick, Tim Johnson, 2006) (T) **11.0** FILM Rio (Carlos Saldanha, 2011) (T) **12.50** News (T) **12.55** Local News and Weather (T) **1.0** Gino's Italian Christmas Feast (T) (R) **1.30** FILM E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (Steven Spielberg, 1982) (T) **3.45** Live Premiership Rugby Union (T) Harlequins v Bristol Bears (kick-off 4.15pm).**6.30** Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals (T) (R) **7.0** Local News (T) **7.10** Evening News (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

8.30 **The Voice Kids** (T) Round two of the blind auditions gets under way and the superstar coaches Ronan Keating, Danny Jones, Pixie Lott and will.i.am complete their teams. Presented by Emma Willis. Continues tomorrow.

10.0 **News** (T) Weather

10.20 **Billy Connolly: It's Been a Pleasure** (T) (R) Celebration of the comedian's greatest standup performances.

11.35 **Premiership Rugby Union Highlights** (T)

12.35 **Shop: Ideal World** **3.0** The Cube Christmas Special (T) (R) **4.0** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Food We Love (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.10 **Countdown** (T) (R) **6.50** The King of Queens (T) (R) **7.40** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **8.35** The Simpsons (T) (R) **11.50** FILM Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events (Brad Silberling, 2004) (T) **1.55** Chateau DIY at Christmas (T) (R) **2.55** The Snowman: The Film That Changed Christmas (T) (R) **4.0** The Snowman (T) (R) **4.35** A Place in the Sun (T) **5.35** News (T) **6.05** Extraordinary Escapes at Christmas With Sandi Toksvig (T) (R) **7.0** Christmas at Harewood House (T) (R)

8.0 **Escape to the Chateau at Christmas** (T) (R) The Strawbridges prepare their festive celebrations.

9.0 **First Dates at Christmas** (T) The restaurant's festive guests include a jeweller and a portrait artist, a vicar and a parish worker, a DJ and the self-proclaimed Queen of Christmas.

10.0 **The Lateish Show With Mo Gilligan: Christmas Special** (T) With Samson Kayo.

11.05 **Micky Flanagan: The Out Out Tour** (T) (R) A 2011 show.

12.05 FILM **The Untouchables** (1987) (T) **2.05** FILM K-19: The Widowmaker (2002) (T) **4.20** Old House, New Home (T) (R) **5.15** Food Unwrapped (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **9.15** Entertainment News (T) **9.20** FILM Murder at the Gallop (George Pollock, 1963) (T) **11.05** FILM Oklahoma! (Fred Zinnemann, 1955) (T) **1.55** FILM Hook (Steven Spielberg, 1991) (T) **4.50** FILM The Goonies (Richard Donner, 1985) (T) **6.55** News (T) **7.0** World's Strongest Man 2022 (T) **7.55** News (T)

8.0 **Britain's Poshest Designer Outlet: Inside Bicester Village** (T) Behind the scenes of the Oxfordshire-based retail centre.

9.0 **Riptide** (T) New series. When a man fails to return from a swim, police presume he has drowned, but his wife has suspicions. Psychological thriller, starring Jo Joyner.

10.0 **Dolly Parton: 20 Greatest Moments** (T) (R)

11.55 **Dolly, Kenny & Friends: Greatest Hits** (T) (R) A country music special.

1.0 **The Live Casino Show** (T) **3.10** World's Funniest TV Ads (T) (R) **4.05** Henry VIII: Rise of a Tyrant (T) (R) **4.50** Divine Designs (T) (R) **5.20** Paw Patrol **5.45** Pip and Posy (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Winter Walks** (T) (R) Alastair Campbell treks across the hillsides of Ribblesdale. **7.30** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R) Michael Portillo continues his journey through Germany.

8.0 **Royal Institution Christmas Lectures With Dame Sue Black** (T) Prof Sue Black, a forensic investigator, explains the scientific detective process to identify the dead and the living.

9.0 **One Foot in the Grave** (T) (R) Christmas special from 1990. Victor refuses to buy any presents.

10.0 **Tutti Frutti** (T) (R) Suzi gives up her job to go on the road.

11.0 **Tutti Frutti** (T) (R) Noreen throws in the towel.

12.0 **Nature: The Classical Collection** (T) **1.0** Hope Street (T) (R) **1.45** Winter Walks (T) (R) **2.15** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R) **2.45** Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm FILM Trolls: World Tour (2020) **8.20** Trolls Holiday in Harmony **8.45** Becoming … The Batman **9.0** I Can See Your Voice **10.0** FILM Game Night (2018) **11.35** Love in the Flesh **12.20** Love in the Flesh **1.05** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **1.50** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice **2.35** Hot Property **3.05** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice **3.50** Press X to Continue

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.15** Yianni: Supercar Customiser **7.50** Eddie Eats America **8.20** Top Gear: Burma Special **11.0** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **12.0** James May's Cars of the People **1.0** QI XL **2.0** Would I Lie to You? **2.40** Would I Lie to You? **3.20** Would I Lie to You? **4.0** Top Gear India Special **6.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **6.40** QI XL **7.40** Would I Lie to You? **8.20** Would I Lie to You? **9.0** QI **9.40** QI **10.20** Would I Lie to You? **11.0** Live at the Moth Club **12.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **1.0** Mock the Week **1.40** QI **2.15** Would I Lie to You? **2.45** Mel Giedroyc: Unforgivable **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **6.10** We're Going on a Bear Hunt **6.35** The Tiger Who Came to Tea **7.0** Ramsay's Hotel Hell **8.0** Black-ish **9.0** How I Met Your Mother **10.0** The Goldbergs **11.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** FILM The Karate Kid (1984) **4.25** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **4.35** Modern Family **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.30** Modern Family **9.0** Gogglebox Festive Special **10.35** Naked Attraction **11.40** First Dates at Christmas 2021 **12.45** The Inbetweeners **1.50** Made in Chelsea: Bonjour Baby **2.45** Summer House **3.35** The Inbetweeners **4.25** The Big Bang Theory **4.50** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Film4

11.0am FILM Megamind (2010) Animated superhero comedy, with the voice of Will Ferrell. **12.55** FILM Fantastic Mr Fox (2009) Stop-motion animated adventure, with the voice of George Clooney. **2.35** FILM Tooth Fairy (2010) Family comedy, starring Dwayne Johnson. **4.40** FILM Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit (1993) Comedy sequel, starring Whoopi Goldberg. **6.50** FILM Knight and Day (2010) Comedy adventure, starring Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz. **9.0** FILM Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (2011) Action adventure sequel, starring Tom Cruise. **11.40** FILM American Made (2017) Fact-based comedy-drama, starring Tom Cruise. **1.55** FILM Escape from New York (1981) Sci-fi action adventure, starring Kurt Russell.

ITV2

6.0am Unwind With ITV **6.25** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.0** Secret Crush **8.0** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory **9.0** FILM Ella Enchanted (2004) **10.55** FILM Annie (2014) **1.15** Family Fortunes **2.15** Alan Carr's Epic Gameshow: Celebrity Special **3.20** FILM Hotel Transylvania 3: A Monster Vacation (2018) **5.15** FILM The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014) **8.0** FILM Aquaman (2018) **10.45** Family Guy **11.45** American Dad! **12.40** Shopping With Keith Lemon **1.40** All American **3.15** Dress to Impress **4.10** Secret Crush **5.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **5.30** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

6.0am Bondi Rescue **6.30** Terry Pratchett's The Colour of Magic **8.30** Terry Pratchett's The Colour of Magic **10.30** TV's Greatest Gameshows **12.30** The 80s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **1.30** The Midwich Cuckoos **2.45** The Midwich Cuckoos **3.45** The Midwich Cuckoos **4.45** The Midwich Cuckoos **5.45** The Midwich Cuckoos **6.45** The Midwich Cuckoos **7.45** The Midwich Cuckoos **9.0** Dynamo: Beyond Belief **10.0** Dynamo: Beyond Belief **11.0** Dynamo: Beyond Belief **12.0** We're Here **1.10** The 80s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **2.05** Micah Richards' Player Pranks **2.35** Jurassic Greatest Moments: Jurassic Park to Jurassic World **3.35** Road Wars **4.0** Rob & Romesh vs Golf **5.0** Highway Patrol

Annie, ITV2

Sky Arts

6.0am Turandot on Sydney Harbour **8.05** Tales of the Unexpected **8.35** Tales of the Unexpected **9.05** The Agatha Christie Hour **10.05** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.05** Comedy Legends **12.05** André Rieu: Welcome to My World **1.05** Cirque Du Soleil: Mystery of Mystere **2.30** Frank Sinatra & Gene Kelly: Ol' Blue Eyes Is Back **3.45** A Swingin' Christmas With Len Phillips Swing Orchestra **5.10** The Agatha Christie Hour **6.10** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.10** The Beach Boys: Endless Harmony **9.25** George Harrison: Living in the Material World **1.25** Ringo Starr: Ringo at the Ryman **4.0** Status Quo: Pictures - Live in Montreux

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Fish Town **7.50** Game of Thrones **11.0** The Gilded Age **9.0** Game of Thrones **12.15** I Hate Suzie Too **1.20** Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty **2.25** Mare of Easttown **3.35** In Treatment **4.05** The Fear Index **5.05** Fish Town

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: More One Hit Wonders (2/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Cellist Andrei Ioniță and pianist Florian Mitrea perform Beethoven. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. The Vienna SO and soprano Miah Persson perform the first part of Haydn's The Seasons. **4.0** Faroe Islands Sound Walk: Suduroy (3/3) **5.0** New Generation Artists **6.15** Words and Music (R) **7.30** Proms at Christmas 2022: Prom 67. Thomas Sondergård conducts the RSNO and violinist Nicola Benedetti in Adès's Three-Piece Suite from Powder Her Face (Suite No 1), Wynton Marsalis's Violin Concerto, Britten's Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes and Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West Side Story. (R) **9.25** Proms at Christmas 2022. Cynthia Erivo pays tribute to inspirational female vocalists, backed by the BBC Concert Orchestra. (R) **11.0** Night Tracks **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** Room 5: Hannah (8/8) **9.30** Flight of the Ospreys. The team analyse their findings. (11/11) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Giving Up the Ghost. By Hilary Mantel. (2/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Phantoms in the Brain. A healthy man who suddenly developed agonising back pain. (4/4) **11.30** Laura Barton's Notes on Music. The connection between cars and girls. (3/3) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** The New Gurus. How Tom Ralis became a seduction guru. (7/8) **12.32** Sliced Bread (R) **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Causing a Scene. Classic ghost scenes on the big screen. (2/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** The Dark Is Rising. Drama, by Susan Cooper. (5) **3.0** Short Cuts **3.30** A Thorough Examination With Drs Chris and Xand: Can I Change? Does willpower exist? (4/8) **4.0** Bad Blood: The Story of Eugenics **4.30** Great Lives. Bob Harris on Matt Busby. (4/8) **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **6.0** News **6.15** Just William: The Great Performer. By Richmal Crompton. (3/5) **6.30** The Cold Swedish Winter (2/4) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Add to Playlist (2/9) **8.0** Christmas Recycled (R) **8.40** In Touch **9.0** All in the Mind **9.30** Room 5 (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Marple - Three New Stories (7/10) **11.0** Lights Out. How an amateur radio in Kyiv is helping a community. (3/6) **11.30** Only After Dark: Night Ferry (1/3) **12.0** News **12.15** Wild Bond (2/5) **12.30** Book of the Week (2/5) **12.48** Shipping **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Trueman and Riley (2/4) **6.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (2/4) **7.0** Last Christmas (2/5) **7.15** Good News Stories (2/5) **7.30** Ed Reardon's Week (4/6) **8.0** The Goon Show (9/25) **8.30** Little Blighty on the Down (1/5) **9.0** Who Goes There? (4/6) **9.30** No Commitments (5/6) **10.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (2/2) **11.0** Trueman and Riley (2/4) **11.30** A Charles Paris Mystery (2/4) **12.0** Last Christmas (2/5) **12.15** Good News Stories (2/5) **12.30** Ed Reardon's Week (4/6) **1.0** The Goon Show (9/25) **1.30** Little Blighty on the Down (1/5) **2.0** Who Goes There? (4/6) **2.30** No Commitments (5/6) **3.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (2/2) **4.0** Trueman and Riley (2/4) **4.30** A Charles Paris Mystery (2/4) **5.0** Last Christmas (2/5) **5.15** Good News Stories (2/5) **5.30** Ed Reardon's Week (4/6) **6.0** The Goon Show (9/25) **6.30** Little Blighty on the Down (1/5) **7.0** Who Goes There? (4/6) **7.30** No Commitments (5/6) **8.0** TED Radio Hour (36/52) **8.50** Inheritance Tracks **9.0** Hilarious Histories: What's So Funny About the Past? (1/3) **10.0** The Cold Swedish Winter (1/4) **10.30** Cabin Pressure (1/6) **11.0** My Teenage Diary (4/6) **11.30** The Celebrity Voicemail Show (1/2) **11.45** Guy Browning's Small Talk (1/2) **12.0** Émile Zola: His Masterpiece (2/2) **1.0** Trueman and Riley (2/4) **1.30** A Charles Paris Mystery (2/4) **2.0** Last Christmas (2/5) **2.15** Good News Stories (2/5) **2.30** Ed Reardon's Week (4/6) **3.0** The Goon Show (9/25) **3.30** Little Blighty on the Down (1/5) **4.0** Who Goes There? (4/6) **4.30** No Commitments (5/6) **5.0** The Piper's Chair

Wednesday

Moana, BBC One

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.0** Attenborough: 60 Years in the Wild (T) (R) **10.0** FILM A Dog's Journey (2019) (T) **11.40** FILM Wallace & Gromit in the Curse of the Were-Rabbit (2005) (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.15** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.25** Zog (T) **1.55** Zog and the Flying Doctors (2020) (T) **2.20** FILM Finding Dory (2016) (T) **3.50** FILM Moana (2016) (T) **5.30** Pointless Celebrities (T) (R) **6.15** News (T) **6.35** Regional News and Weather **6.45** The Weakest Link (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **Dogs in the Wild: Meet the Family** (T) Chris Packham narrates a documentary following the lives of wild dog packs across the world.

9.0 **Mayflies** (T) Two friends are reunited 30 years after the greatest summer of their lives when one gets terrible news. Drama, with Tony Curran and Martin Compston.

10.0 News (T)
10.25 **Regional News** (T) Weather
10.30 FILM **Pirates of the Caribbean: Salazar's Revenge** (2017) (T) Adventure, starring Johnny Depp.
12.30 **Michael McIntyre's Christmas Wheel** (T) (R) **1.30** A Question of Sport: Christmas Special (T) (R) **2.0** Weather (T) **2.05** News (T)

BBC Two

6.35 **Sign Zone** See Hear (T) **7.05** Between the Covers (T) (R) **7.35** The Polar Bear Family and Me (T) (R) **8.35** Jay's Yorkshire Workshop (T) (R) **9.35** FILM The Third Man (1949) (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt: Ceramics Special (T) (R) **1.0** Great British Railway Journeys (T) (R) **1.30** FILM South Pacific (1958) (T) **3.55** The Real Marigold on Tour (T) (R) **4.55** FILM Whisky Galore! (2016) (T) **6.30** Celebrity Antiques Road Trip (T) **7.30** Festive House of Games (T)

8.0 **Only Connect** (T) Two teams battle for the title of Champion of Champions.

8.30 **Christmas University Challenge** (T) The first of this year's semi-finals.

9.0 **Vienna Blood** (T) An actress is murdered at a silent movie premiere, leaving Max and Oskar in search of men with dangerous obsessions.

10.30 FILM **Heat** (Michael Mann, 1995) (T) A detective becomes obsessed with capturing a career criminal. Thriller, starring Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.
1.15 **Sign Zone** Trailblazers: A Rocky Mountain Road Trip (T) (R) **2.15** See Hear (T) (R) **2.45** B&B By the Sea (T) **5.15** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.35** Local News and Weather (T) **1.45** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory (T) (R) **2.45** FILM Hotel Transylvania (Genndy Tartakovsky, 2012) (T) **4.30** Tipping Point (T) **5.30** The Chase (T) **6.30** Local News and Weather (T) **6.45** News and Weather (T) **7.0** Coronation Street (T)

8.0 **The Voice Kids** (T) The young finalists take to the stage for the final, with support from coaches Ronan Keating, Danny Jones, Pixie Lott and will.i.am. Last in the series.

10.0 **News** (T) Weather
10.15 FILM **Die Hard 2** (Renny Harlin, 1990) (T) Action thriller sequel, starring Bruce Willis and Bonnie Bedelia.
12.20 **All Elite Wrestling: Rampage** (T) **1.15** Shop: Ideal World **3.0** Bradley & Barney: Breaking Dad at Christmas (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Festive Food We Love (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.35 **The King of Queens** (T) (R) **7.20** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **8.10** The Simpsons (T) (R) **9.35** FILM Playing With Fire (Andy Fickman, 2019) (T) **11.30** Chateau DIY at Christmas (T) (R) **12.30** News (T) **12.35** The Greatest Snowman 2022 (T) (R) **2.05** Billionaire Blooms at Christmas (T) (R) **3.05** FILM Dad's Army (Norman Cohen, 1971) (T) **5.0** A Place in the Sun (T) **6.0** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **6.30** News (T) **6.50** FILM Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle (Jake Kasdan, 2017) (T)

9.0 **Jon and Lucy's Party of the Year** (T) Jon Richardson and Lucy Beaumont host a Christmas getaway with some of their closest friends Romesh Ranganathan, Judi Love and Tom Allen.

10.0 **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special** (T) (R)
11.05 **Celebrity I Literally Just Told You With Jimmy Carr** (T) (R)
12.10 FILM **Little Fockers** (2010) (T) **1.50** FILM Rosemary's Baby (1968) (T) **4.10** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **5.0** A Year at Jimmy's Farm (T) (R) **5.55** Countdown (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake! 9.15** Entertainment News (T) **9.20** Friends (T) (R) **9.45** FILM A Cinderella Story (Mark Rosman, 2004) (T) **11.45** FILM The Secret Garden (Agnieszka Holland, 1993) (T) **2.10** FILM The Man in the Iron Mask (Randall Wallace, 1998) (T) **4.15** FILM The Mask of Zorro (Martin Campbell, 1998) (T) **6.55** News (T) **7.0** World's Strongest Man 2022 (T) **7.55** News (T)

8.0 **Inside the Tower of London at Christmas** (T) (R) Emma Bell has a bold plan to transform the fortress into a spectacular winter wonderland, inspired by the tower's famous menagerie.

9.0 **Riptide** (T) Alison's suspicions rise when she learns that Ethan argued with Sean on the beach.

10.0 **Adele: 30 Greatest Moments** (T) (R) Memorable events from the singer's career.
11.55 **Most Shocking Celebrity Moments in Pop** (T) (R)
1.45 **The Live Casino Show** (T) **3.50** Great British Gardens: Season By Season With Carol Klein (T) (R) **5.25** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.50** Pip and Posy (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Winter Walks** (T) (R) Baroness Sayeeda Warsi goes rambling in the Yorkshire Dales. **7.30** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R) Michael Portillo's journey brings him to Sicily.

8.0 **Royal Institution Christmas Lectures With Dame Sue Black** (T) Prof Black explains the scientific detective process to identify the dead and the living.

9.0 **PQ17: An Arctic Convoy Disaster** (T) (R) The story of an allied convoy of 35 ships heading for the Russian port of Arkhangelsk in 1942.

10.0 **The Real T-Rex With Chris Packham** (T) (R) A look at new research into T rex.
11.0 **Tutti Frutti** (T) (R) Suzi gets a house call from her dentist.
12.0 **Tutti Frutti** (T) (R) The tour ends. Last in the series.
1.10 **Winter Walks** (R) **1.40** Great Continental Railway Journeys (R) **2.10** Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm FILM Ghostbusters (1984) **8.40** FILM Edward Scissorhands (1990) **10.20** Mood **11.05** Mood **11.50** Inside Classical: Afrobeats Concerto **12.50** Tonight With Target **1.35** The Rap Game UK **2.40** Hot Property **3.10** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.0** Dara Ó Briain's Go 8 Bit **7.45** Expedition With Steve Backshall **9.40** World's Most Dangerous Roads **11.0** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **12.0** James May's Cars of the People **1.0** QI XL **2.0** Would I Lie to You? **2.40** Would I Lie to You? **3.20** Would I Lie to You? **4.0** Top Gear USA Special **5.0** Top Gear: Polar Challenge **6.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **6.40** QI XL **7.40** Would I Lie to You? **8.20** Would I Lie to You? **9.0** QI **9.40** QI **10.20** Would I Lie to You? **11.0** Taskmaster: Champion of Champions **12.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **1.0** Mock the Week **1.40** QI **2.15** Would I Lie to You? **2.45** Mel Giedroyc: Unforgivable **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Hotel Hell **8.0** Black-ish **9.0** How I Met Your Mother **10.0** The Goldbergs **11.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** FILM The Karate Kid Part II (1986) **4.15** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **4.30** Modern Family **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.30** Modern Family **9.0** Gogglebox Festive Special **10.35** Naked Attraction **11.35** First Dates at Christmas **12.45** The Inbetweeners **1.50** Gogglebox Festive Special **3.15** Summer House **4.0** The Big Bang Theory **4.25** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.15** The Goldbergs

Film4

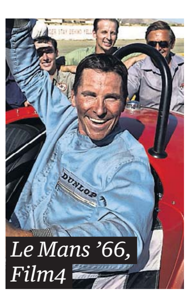
11.0am FILM The Kid Who Would Be King (2019) Fantasy adventure, starring Louis Ashbourne Serkis and Rebecca Ferguson. **1.35** FILM Mrs Doubtfire (1993) Comedy, starring Robin Williams. **3.55** FILM Now You See Me 2 (2016) Crime thriller sequel, starring Jesse Eisenberg. **6.40** FILM The Day After Tomorrow (2004) Disaster thriller, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Dennis Quaid. **9.0** FILM Le Mans '66 (2019) Fact-based drama, starring Matt Damon and Christian Bale. **12.05** FILM Saint Maud (2019) Horror, starring Morfydd Clark and Jennifer Ehle. **1.50** FILM Carrie (1976) Stephen King horror, starring Sissy Spacek and Piper Laurie.

ITV2

6.0am Unwind With ITV **6.10** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **6.45** Love Bites **7.45** Secret Crush **8.40** In for a Penny **9.10** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory **10.10** FILM Dr Dolittle (1998) **11.55** FILM Garfield (2004) **1.30** Family Fortunes **2.35** Alan Carr's Epic Gameshow: Celebrity Special **3.35** Catchphrase: Catchiest Moments **4.40** FILM Penguins of Madagascar (2014) **6.25** FILM Shazam! (2019) **9.0** FILM Ocean's 8 (2018) **11.15** Family Guy **11.40** Family Guy **12.10** American Dad! **12.35** American Dad! **1.05** Shopping With Keith Lemon **1.35** Shopping With Keith Lemon **2.0** Shopping With Keith Lemon **2.25** All American **3.15** All American **4.05** Dress to Impress **5.0** Secret Crush **5.50** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

6.0am Bondi Rescue **7.0** Beyoncé: I Am – World Tour **9.0** Harry Potter: A Who's Who of the Wizarding World **10.0** Harry Potter: Hogwarts Tournament of Houses **11.0** Harry Potter: Hogwarts Tournament of Houses **12.0** The 90s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **1.0** A League of Their Own **2.0** A League of Their Own **3.0** A League of Their Own **4.0** A League of Their Own **5.0** A League of Their Own **6.0** A League of Their Own **7.0** A League of Their Own **8.0** A League of Their Own **9.0** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **9.45** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **10.30** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **11.15** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **12.0** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **12.45** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **1.30** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **2.15** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **3.0** We're Here **4.10** Rob & Romesh vs Drag **5.05** Highway Patrol



Le Mans '66, Film4

Sky Arts

6.0am Arts Uncovered **6.10** Birmingham Opera Company Presents Rhinegold **9.0** The Agatha Christie Hour **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** The World in a Painting **12.15** Peter Pan Live **2.55** André Rieu: La Vie Est Belle **4.30** Tales of the Unexpected **5.0** The Agatha Christie Hour **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** Landscape Artist of the Year 2018 **8.0** Tina Turner: Live in Barcelona **10.10** FILM Tina (2021) **12.20** Tina Turner: One Last Time – Live at Wembley Stadium **2.20** Miles Davis: Miles Electric – A Different Kind of Blue **4.05** Blue Note Records: Beyond the Notes

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets **8.0** Game of Thrones **9.05** Succession **9.0** Game of Thrones **12.15** I Hate Suzie Too **1.20** Perry Mason **2.30** In Treatment **5.0** Hotel Secrets

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: More One Hit Wonders. Joseph Canteloube and John Cage. (3/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Accordionist Ryan Corbett plays Liszt's Prelude and Fugue on the Theme B-A-C-H. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. Andrés Orozco-Estrada conducts the Vienna Symphony Orchestra in Summer from Haydn's The Seasons. **4.0** Choral Evensong. From Croydon Minster on the Feast of the Holy Innocents. **5.0** New Generation Artists. The Mithras Trio play Chausson's youthful Piano Trio. **6.15** Words and Music (R) **7.30** Proms at Christmas 2022. Nicholas Collon conducts the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and violinist Pekka Kuusisto in Debussy's La Mer, Vaughan Williams's The Lark Ascending, Adès's Marchentanze and Sibelius's Symphony No 5 in E flat. (R) **9.30** Proms at Christmas 2022. An organ recital by Nathan Laube, including music by Liszt, Wagner, Franck and Alkan. (R) **11.0** Night Tracks **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** The Four Freedoms Discussion. The 2022 Reith lecturers reflect on Franklin D Roosevelt's Four Freedoms. (5/5) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Giving Up the Ghost (3/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Room 5. Helena Merriman speaks to playwright Abi Morgan. **11.30** Oti Mabuse's Dancing Legends. A profile of Dougie Squires. (4/4) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** The New Gurus. Peter McCormack joins Helen Lewis to talk about cryptocurrency. **12.32** Sliced Bread: Electric Toothbrushes (8/20) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Causing a Scene (3/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** The Dark Is Rising. Drama. **3.0** Money Box Live **3.30** All in the Mind (R) **4.0** Thinking Allowed (2/7) **4.30** The Media Show **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.15** Just William: The Great Performer. By Richmal Crompton (4/5) **6.30** BBC New Comedy Awards 2022 (R) **7.0** The Archers (R) **7.15** Add to Playlist. With Catrin Finch and Neil Brand. **8.0** First Contact. Preparations for first contact with aliens. **8.45** One to One (R) **9.0** A Thorough Examination With Drs Chris and Xand: Can I Change? (R) **9.30** The Media Show (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime (8/10) **11.0** Sandi Toksvig's Hygge. With Prof Brian Cox and Zoe Lyons. (4/4) **11.30** Only After Dark (2/3) **12.0** News **12.15** Wild Bond: The Villain (3/5) **12.30** Book of the Week (3/5) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Trueman and Riley (3/4) **6.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (3/4) **7.0** Last Christmas (3/5) **7.15** Good News Stories (3/5) **7.30** Relativity (4/4) **8.0** Hancock's Half Hour (10/16) **8.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (5/6) **9.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **9.30** Trevor's World of Sport (6/6) **10.0** The Piper's Chair **11.0** Trueman and Riley (3/4) **11.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (3/4) **12.0** Last Christmas (3/5) **12.15** Good News Stories (3/5) **12.30** Relativity (4/4) **1.0** Hancock's Half Hour (10/16) **1.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (5/6) **2.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **2.30** Trevor's World of Sport (6/6) **3.0** The Piper's Chair **4.0** Trueman and Riley (3/4) **4.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (3/4) **5.0** Last Christmas (3/5) **5.15** Good News Stories (3/5) **5.30** Relativity (4/4) **6.0** Hancock's Half Hour (10/16) **6.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (5/6) **7.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **7.30** Trevor's World of Sport (6/6) **8.0** Raise Your Game **9.0** Hilarious Histories: What's So Funny About the Past? (2/3) **10.0** A Normal **10.30** ReincarNathan (6/6) **11.0** The Million Pound Radio Show (4/6) **11.30** Radio 9 (4/4) **12.0** The Piper's Chair **1.0** Trueman and Riley (3/4) **1.30** A Charles Paris Mystery (3/4) **2.0** Last Christmas (3/5) **2.15** Good News Stories (3/5) **2.30** Relativity (4/4) **3.0** Hancock's Half Hour (10/16) **3.30** Life, Death and Sex With Mike and Sue (5/6) **4.0** The Write Stuff (3/6) **4.30** Trevor's World of Sport (6/6) **5.0** Don Quixote (1/2)

Thursday

Marie Antoinette, BBC Two

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.0** Attenborough: 60 Years in the Wild (T) (R) **10.0** FILM Planes (2013) (T) **11.25** FILM Cars 3 (2017) (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.20** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.30** FILM The Highway Rat (2017) (T) **1.55** FILM Zootropolis (2016) (T) **3.35** FILM The BFG (Steven Spielberg, 2016) (T) **5.25** Pointless Celebrities (T) (R) **6.15** News (T) **6.35** Regional News and Weather (T) **6.45** The Weakest Link (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **Antiques Roadshow Christmas Special: Toys and Childhood** (T) Fiona Bruce visits the Museum of the Home in central London.

9.0 **Mayflies** (T) As Jimmy organises the Swiss trip, tempers flare when Anna discovers the plan and declares she will not support Tully's assisted dying.

10.0 **News** (T)
10.25 **Regional News** (T) Weather
10.30 **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** (T) (R) Cathy's boyfriend joins the family.
11.0 FILM **The Others** (Alejandro Amenabar, 2001) (T) Period supernatural thriller, starring Nicole Kidman and Fionnula Flanagan.
12.40 **Weather** (T) **12.45** News (T)

BBC Two

6.20 **Sign Zone** Celebrity MasterChef Christmas Cook-Off (T) (R) **7.20** The Polar Bear Family and Me (R) **8.20** Jay's Yorkshire Workshop (T) (R) **9.20** FILM The Private Affairs of Bel Ami (1947) **11.10** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.10** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **12.55** Great British Railway Journeys (T) (R) **1.25** Lucy Worsley on the Mystery Queen (T) (R) **2.25** FILM Evil Under the Sun (1982) (T) **4.15** FILM Death on the Nile (1978) (T) **6.30** Celebrity Antiques Road Trip (T) **7.30** Festive House of Games (T)

8.0 **Only Connect Happy Hour Special** (T) (R)

8.30 **Christmas University Challenge** (T) The second of this year's semi-finals.

9.0 **Marie Antoinette** (T) New series. Historical drama about the French queen, starring Emilia Schüle.

9.55 **Madonna at the BBC** (T) (R) Archive performances.

10.55 FILM **Desperately Seeking Susan** (Susan Seidelman, 1985) A housewife becomes fixated with the antics of a fugitive temptress. Comedy, starring Rosanna Arquette and Madonna.
12.35 FILM **Madonna: Truth Or Dare** (Alek Keshishian, 1991) (T) Documentary. **2.30** B&B By the Sea (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.35** Local News and Weather (T) **1.45** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory (T) (R) **2.45** FILM Hotel Transylvania 2 (Genndy Tartakovsky, 2015) (T) **4.30** Tipping Point (T) **5.30** The Chase (T) **6.30** Local News and Weather (T) **6.45** News and Weather (T) **7.0** Emmerdale (T)

8.0 **Coronation Street** (T) Stephen fears the game is up.

8.30 **Farewell Doc Martin** (T) Cameras follow the Doc Martin cast and crew filming its 10th and final series.

9.35 **John Bishop's End of Year Show** (T) The comedian takes a look back at the past year with guests including Ian McKellen and Beth Mead.

10.25 **News** (T) Weather
10.44 **Local News** (T) Weather
10.45 FILM **Unstoppable** (Tony Scott, 2010) (T) Action thriller, starring Denzel Washington and Chris Pine.
12.25 **Shop: Ideal World** **3.0** Game of Talents (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Beautiful Baking With Juliet Sear (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.35 **The King of Queens** (T) (R) **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **8.15** The Simpsons (T) (R) **10.40** FILM Barnyard (Steve Oedekerk, 2006) (T) **12.25** News (T) **12.30** Chateau DIY at Christmas (T) (R) **1.30** Escape to the Chateau at Christmas (T) (R) **2.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces: Winter World Tour (T) (R) **3.30** The Dog House at Christmas (T) (R) **4.30** A Place in the Sun (T) **5.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **6.30** News (T) **7.0** George Clarke's Alaskan Adventure (T) (R)

8.0 **Travel Man: 96 Hours in Rio** (T) Joe Lycett and Stephen Mangan tour Rio de Janeiro.

9.0 **Prince Andrew: The Musical** (T) Comedy satire centring on events, relationships and controversies in the prince's life, including a reimagining of his Newsnight interview. Written by and starring Kieran Hodgson.

10.05 **Gogglebox 2022** (T) (R) A round-up of memorable moments of the year.
12.05 FILM **Jerry Maguire** (1996) (T) Romantic comedy drama, starring Tom Cruise. **2.25** FILM American Gigolo (1980) (T) **4.20** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (T) (R) **4.40** The Great Christmas Bake Off 2022 (T) (R) **5.50** Countdown (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **8.45** Entertainment News (T) **8.55** FILM Ever After: A Cinderella Story (Andy Tennant, 1998) (T) **11.20** FILM You've Got Mail (Nora Ephron, 1998) (T) **1.45** FILM Cast Away (Robert Zemeckis, 2000) (T) **4.35** FILM The Terminal (Steven Spielberg, 2004) (T) **6.55** News (T) **7.0** World's Strongest Man 2022 (T) **7.55** News (T)

8.0 **World's Most Expensive All-You-Can-Eat Buffet** (T) Grace Dent takes a look at some of the most enticing luxury all-you-can-eat buffets.

9.0 **Riptide** (T) Realising Alison is determined to investigate Sean's disappearance, Dan decides to take action. Alison discovers Michael is in possession of Sean's watch.

10.0 **Comedy Classic: The Vicar of Dibley** (T) (R) Documentary celebrating Richard Curtis's much-loved BBC sitcom.
11.30 **Billy Connolly: 30 Funniest Moments** (T) (R)
1.20 **The Live Casino Show** (T) **3.25** Great British Gardens: Season By Season With Carol Klein (T) (R) **5.0** Warship: Life at Sea (R) **5.45** Paw Patrol (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Horizon: Volcanoes of the Solar System** (T) (R) **7.15** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R) Michael Portillo continues his journey around Sicily.

7.45 **Ken Dodd: How Tickled We Were** (T) (R) A celebration of the life and work of the Liverpudlian comedian.

9.0 FILM **Chariots of Fire** (Hugh Hudson, 1981) (T) Oscar-winning drama based on the true story of British runners Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, going for gold at the 1924 Olympics in Paris.

11.0 FILM **The Magnificent Seven** (John Sturges, 1960) (T) An enigmatic loner rounds up a band of gunslingers to help oppressed Mexican villagers. Western, starring Yul Brynner and Steve McQueen.
1.05 **Proms 2022: Unmissable Moments** (T) (R) **2.45** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm FILM Ghostbusters II (1989) **8.40** Becoming: Nathan Drake **9.0** FILM La La Land (2016) **11.0** **Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne** **11.45** Shrill **12.10** Shrill **12.35** Hot Property **1.05** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **1.50** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice **2.35** The Irish League Show **3.05** The Ulster Rugby Show **3.35** My Mate's a Bad Date

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.0** Yianni: Supercar Customiser **7.35** Eddie Eats Christmas **8.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **9.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **10.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **11.20** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **12.20** James May's Cars of the People **1.20** QI XL **2.20** Would I Lie to You? **4.20** Top Gear Nepal Special **6.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **6.40** QI XL **7.40** Would I Lie to You? **9.0** QI XL **10.0** Live at the Moth Club **11.0** Taskmaster: Champion of Champions **12.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **12.55** Mock the Week **1.35** QI **2.25** QI **2.55** Mel Giedroyc: Unforgivable **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Hotel Hell **8.0** Black-ish **9.0** How I Met Your Mother **10.0** The Goldbergs **11.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** FILM The Karate Kid Part III (1989) **4.10** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **4.30** Modern Family **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.30** Modern Family **9.0** Gogglebox **10.0** Naked Attraction **11.05** First Dates **12.15** The Inbetweeners **12.50** The Inbetweeners **1.25** Rick and Morty **1.55** Rick and Morty **2.25** Summer House **3.10** The Inbetweeners **3.35** The Inbetweeners **4.05** The Big Bang Theory **4.25** The Big Bang Theory **4.50** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.15** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Film4

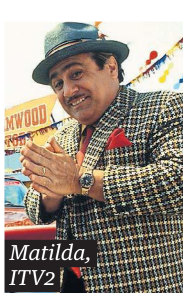
11.0am FILM Marmaduke (2010) Comedy, starring Lee Pace.**12.45** FILM Miracle on 34th Street (1994) Christmas family drama remake, starring Richard Attenborough. **3.0** FILM Bridge to Terabithia (2007) Fantasy drama, starring Josh Hutcherson. **4.50** FILM The Addams Family (1991) Black comedy, starring Anjelica Huston. **6.45** FILM Instant Family (2018) Comedy, starring Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne. **9.0** FILM Bad Boys for Life (2020) Action sequel, starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence. **11.25** FILM Charlie's Angels (2000) Action adventure, starring Drew Barrymore. **1.20** FILM Unfaithful (2002) Thriller, starring Diane Lane.

ITV2

6.0am Unwind With ITV **6.15** Love Bites **7.15** Secret Crush **8.10** In for a Penny **8.35** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory **9.35** FILM Dr Dolittle 2 (2001) **11.20** FILM Matilda (1996) **1.25** Family Fortunes **2.25** Alan Carr's Epic Gameshow: Celebrity Special **3.25** Catchphrase: Catchiest Moments **4.30** FILM Ice Age (2002) **6.10** FILM Wonder Woman (2017) **9.0** FILM Bridesmaids (2011) **11.25** Family Guy **11.55** Family Guy **12.25** American Dad! **12.55** American Dad! **1.20** Shopping With Keith Lemon **1.50** Shopping With Keith Lemon **2.15** All American **3.05** Don't Hate the Playaz **3.45** Dress to Impress **4.35** Secret Crush **5.30** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

6.0am Terry Pratchett's Going Postal **10.0** Harry Potter: Hogwarts Tournament of Houses **12.0** Red Riding Hood: After Ever After **1.0** Rob & Romesh vs Strongman **2.0** Rob & Romesh vs West End **3.0** Rob & Romesh vs Restaurants: First Course **4.0** Rob & Romesh vs Restaurants – Second Course **5.0** Sport's Funniest Moments **6.0** Harry Potter: A Who's Who of the Wizarding World **7.0** Harry Potter 20th Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts **9.0** Friends: The Reunion **11.0** The Russell Howard Hour **12.0** We're Here **1.10** Dan Brown's The Lost Symbol **3.05** The 90s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **4.0** Rob & Romesh vs Andy Murray **5.0** Highway Patrol



Matilda, ITV2

Sky Arts

6.0am 10th Classic FM Live Concert **8.0** Tales of the Unexpected **8.30** Tales of the Unexpected **9.0** The Agatha Christie Hour **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Arcimboldo, Portrait of An Audacious Man **12.15** André Rieu: Together Again **2.45** Alfie Boe: Storyteller **5.0** The Agatha Christie Hour **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** Roy Orbison and Friends: A Black and White Night **8.15** Roy Orbison: Mystery Girl Unravelled **9.30** 2022 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony **2.0** FILM Prince: Sign O' the Times (1987) **3.30** Marvin Gaye, Behind the Legend **4.45** Cheltenham Literature Festival **5.35** Music Icons: Psychedelic Rock

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets **8.0** Game of Thrones **10.10** Yellowjackets **9.0** Game of Thrones **11.20** Souls **2.20** Mare of Easttown **4.40** In Treatment **5.10** Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: More One Hit Wonders. Jeremiah Clarke and Luigi Boccherini. (4/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. The Maxwell Quartet and pianist Alasdair Beatson play Os Mutorum from Incholm Antiphon, MacMillan's Piano Quintet "We are Collective" and Franck's Piano Quintet. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. Vienna Symphony Orchestra perform Autumn from Haydn's oratorio The Seasons. Plus, chamber music from members of the Vienna Philharmonic. **5.0** New Generation Artists. Accordion player Ryan Corbett in Bach's English Suite No 2 in A minor, BWV807. **6.15** Words and Music (R) **7.30** Proms at Christmas 2022. Sofi Jeannin conducts the BBC Singers and the English Concert in Handel's Solomon, featuring Iestyn Davies as Solomon. (R) **10.0** Proms at Christmas 2022. A concert by sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash. (R) **11.30** Unclassified (R) **12.30** Through the Night

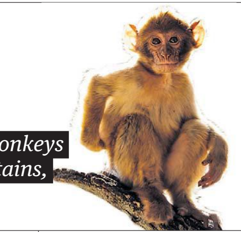
Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** In Our Time **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Giving Up the Ghost. By Hilary Mantel. (4/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Crossing Continents. The problem of obesity in Brazil. (6/10) **11.30** Just William – And Richmal. A centenary celebration of Richmal Crompton's Just William books. (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** The New Gurus. The current turbulent political and social climate. (5/8) **12.30** Sliced Bread (R) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Causing a Scene. Antonia Quirke talks to Ukrainian cinemagoers about war scenes that have resonated with them. (4/5) **2.0** The Archers **2.15** (FM) The Dark Is Rising. Drama based on Susan Cooper's classic fantasy novel. **3.0** Open Country. Helen Mark retraces the route of the Ulster Canal, which has been disused since the 1930s. (12/16) **3.27** Radio 4 Appeal (R) **3.30** Open Book: Agatha Christie at Christmas (R) **4.0** Vic Oliver: The First Castaway Remembered (R) **4.30** Inside Science **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.15** Just William: The Great Performer (R) **6.30** Fags, Mags and Bags. Comedy, written by and starring Sanjeev Kohli. (1/4) (R) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Add to Playlist (R) **8.0** The Briefing Room (6/15) **8.30** A Bad Guy With a Gun (R) **9.0** Inside Science (R) **9.30** In Our Time **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Marple – Three New Stories. The Unravelling, by Natalie Haynes. (9/10) **11.0** Michael Spicer: Before Next Door. Roberta plans a live tour for her husband. (3/4) **11.30** Only After Dark: At the Docks (R) **12.0** News and Weather **12.15** Wild Bond. Emily Knight chooses the best animal henchmen. (4/5) **12.30** Book of the Week: Giving Up the Ghost (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day: The Twelve Tweets of Christmas (R)

Radio 4 Extra

6.30am Bernard Who? (1/2) **7.0** Alan Plater: The What on the Landing **7.45** Lancashire Monologues **8.0** Bernard Who? (2/2) **8.30** Sounds Natural **9.0** Mind Your Own Business (4/6) **9.30** The Iguanodon (1/3) **10.0** Don Quixote (1/2) **11.30** Bernard Who? (1/2) **12.0** Alan Plater: The What on the Landing **12.45** Lancashire Monologues **1.0** Bernard Who? (2/2) **1.30** Sounds Natural **2.0** Mind Your Own Business (4/6) **2.30** The Iguanodon (1/3) **3.0** Don Quixote (1/2) **4.30** Bernard Who? (1/2) **5.0** Alan Plater: The What on the Landing **5.45** Lancashire Monologues **6.0** Bernard Who? (2/2) **6.30** Sounds Natural **7.0** Mind Your Own Business (4/6) **7.30** The Iguanodon (1/3) **8.0** Fear on Four (11/13) **8.30** Graham Greene: Monsignor Quixote Omnibus (1-5/10) **10.0** Comedy Club: Bernard Cribbins' Comedy Classics **11.0** The Bed-Sitting Room **12.0** Don Quixote (1/2) **1.30** Bernard Who? (1/2) **2.0** Alan Plater: The What on the Landing **2.45** Lancashire Monologues **3.0** Bernard Who? (2/2) **3.30** Sounds Natural **4.0** Mind Your Own Business (4/6) **4.30** The Iguanodon (1/3) **5.0** The Lady Vanishes

Friday


Macaque: Monkeys in the Mountains, BBC One

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.0** Dodger (T) (R) **9.45** FILM The Good Dinosaur (2015) (T) **11.15** FILM Kung Fu Panda 3 (2016) (T) **12.35** Room on the Broom (T) (R) **1.05** News (T) **1.25** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.35** The Smeds and the Smoos (T) (R) **2.05** FILM Alice Through the Looking Glass (2016) (T) **3.50** FILM Maleficent (2014) (T) **5.20** Pointless Celebrities (T) (R) **6.10** News (T) **6.35** Regional News and Weather (T) **6.45** The Weakest Link (T) **7.30** **Macaque: Monkeys in the Mountains** (T)

8.30 **Would I Lie to You? At Christmas** (T) Christopher Eccleston, Sophie Willan, Guz Khan and Gloria Hunniford join team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack.

9.0 **Celebrity MasterChef Festive Extravaganza** (T) AJ Pritchard, Chizzy Akudolu, Kitty Scott-Claus and Megan McKenna compete.

10.0 **News** (T)

10.25 **Regional News** (T) Weather

10.30 **Jason Manford: Recent Nostalgia** (T) A standup performance from 2022.

11.30 FILM **The Full Monty** (Peter Cattaneo, 1997) (T) Comedy, with Robert Carlyle, Tom Wilkinson and Mark Addy.

1.0 **That's My Jam** (T) (R) **2.0** Weather (T) **2.05** News (T)

BBC Two

6.30 **Sign Zone** My Life at Christmas With Sally Phillips (R) **7.30** The Polar Bear Family and Me (R) **8.30** Jay's Yorkshire Workshop (R) **9.30** FILM D-Day the Sixth of June (1956) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (R) **1.0** Great British Railway Journeys (R) **1.30** Agatha Christie: Lucy Worsley on the Mystery Queen (R) **2.30** FILM Witness for the Prosecution (1957) **4.25** FILM Murder on the Orient Express (1974) **6.30** **The Year in Music at the BBC: 2022** **7.30** House of Games

8.0 **Only Connect** (T) (R) Victoria Coren Mitchell presents.

8.30 **Christmas University Challenge** (T) The final of the quiz. Last in the series.

9.0 **My Old School** (T) Documentary telling the story of Brandon Lee, a pupil at Bearsden Academy in Glasgow in the 1990s, who was not what he seemed.

10.45 **Miriam Margolyes: Australia Unmasked** (T) (R)

11.45 **Frankie Boyle's 2022 New World Order** (T) (R)

12.30 FILM **1917** (Sam Mendes, 2019) (T) First world war drama, starring George MacKay. (T) **2.20** Simon Schama's History of Now (T) (R) **3.20** B&B By the Sea (T) (R) **5.50** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.35** Local News and Weather (T) **1.45** Becoming the Person I Wanted to See (T) **1.55** Ninja Warrior UK: Race for Glory (T) (R) **2.55** FILM Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween (Ari Sandel, 2018) (T) **4.35** Tipping Point (T) **5.35** The Chase (T) **6.30** Local News and Weather (T) **6.45** News and Weather (T) **7.0** Emmerdale (T) **7.30** Coronation Street (T)

8.0 FILM **Spectre** (Sam Mendes, 2015) (T) James Bond goes in search of the elusive mastermind behind a secret criminal network with links to his own past. Spy thriller, starring Daniel Craig and Christoph Waltz.

10.40 **News** (T) Weather

11.0 **Becoming the Person I Wanted to See** (T) (R)

11.10 **The NFL Show** (T)

12.05 **English Football League Highlights** (T) (R) **1.20** Shop: Ideal World **3.0** The Jonathan Ross Christmas Show (T) (R) **3.55** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Beautiful Baking With Juliet Sear (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.30 **The King of Queens** (T) (R) **7.15** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **8.05** The Simpsons (T) (R) **10.25** Chateau DIY at Christmas (T) (R) **11.25** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **12.25** News (T) **12.30** FILM Bend It Like Beckham (Gurinder Chadha, 2002) (T) **2.40** Amazing Spaces: George's Icelandic Adventure (T) (R) **3.45** The Secret World of Christmas Chocolate (T) (R) **4.45** FILM Sonic the Hedgehog (Jeff Fowler, 2020) (T) **6.30** News (T) **7.0** Christmas at Castle Howard (T) (R)

8.0 FILM **Raiders of the Lost Ark** (Steven Spielberg, 1981) (T) Archaeologist Indiana Jones tries to locate the Ark of the Covenant before the Nazis get their hands on it. Steven Spielberg's action adventure, starring Harrison Ford, Karen Allen, Paul Freeman and John Rhys-Davies.

10.15 **Celebrity Christmas Hell** (T)

11.15 FILM **Daddy's Home 2** (2017) (T) Comedy, starring Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg.

1.10 **Prince Andrew: The Musical** (T) (R) **2.05** FILM Rough Night (2017) (T) **3.50** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **4.40** Couples Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **5.35** House of Craft (R) **5.55** The King of Queens (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake!** **8.45** Entertainment News (T) **8.50** FILM Ben-Hur (William Wyler, 1959) (T) **1.0** FILM Superman (Richard Donner, 1978) (T) **3.50** FILM Where Eagles Dare (Brian G Hutton, 1968) (T) **6.55** News (T) **7.0** World's Strongest Man 2022 (T)

8.0 **Cruising With Susan Calman** (T) Susan takes a helicopter ride over Manhattan, then takes a tour of her new onboard home before sailing to Newport, Rhode Island.

9.0 **Riptide** (T) Dan continues to make inroads into Alison's life. Meanwhile, Hannah vows to find her father and clear his name.

10.0 **Shameless: The Rise & Fall of Katie Price** (T) Documentary about the highs and lows of the model's life and career.

11.30 **Most Shocking Celebrity Moments** (T) (R)

1.25 **The Live Casino Show** (T) **3.25** Warship: Life at Sea (T) (R) **5.05** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.25** Paw Patrol (T) (R) **5.50** Pip and Posy (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) Hits from 1984, featuring Spandau Ballet, Neil, Ultravox and Shakin' Stevens.

8.0 **Top of the Pops** (T) (R) An edition from 28 December 1989, featuring Kim Wilde, Aswad and Band Aid.

9.0 **Chuck Berry in Concert** (T) (R) The rock'n'roll singer performs at the BBC Television Theatre in 1972, featuring his hits including Johnny B Goode and Roll Over Beethoven.

10.20 **Tom Jones' 1950s: The Decade That Made Me** (T) (R) The singer recalls growing up in south Wales.

11.20 **It's Only Rock'n'Roll: Rock'n'Roll at the BBC** (T) (R) Featuring Jerry Lee Lewis, Dion, Dick Dale, Neil Sedaka, Tom Petty and Joan Jett.

12.20 **Country Music By Ken Burns** (T) (R) **1.10** Top of the Pops (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm FILM Missing Link (2019) **8.30** Wallace & Gromit: A Close Shave **9.0** Messi the Enigma **10.0** FILM Goodfellas (1990) **12.20** Ladhood **12.45** Ladhood **1.10** Ladhood **1.35** Ladhood **2.0** Ladhood **2.25** Ladhood **2.50** Lazy Susan **3.05** Freeze: Back on Thin Ice

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.0** Yianni: Supercar Customiser **7.35** Eddie Eats Christmas **8.0** Expedition With Steve Backshall **10.0** World's Most Dangerous Roads **11.20** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2016 **12.20** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **1.20** QI XL **2.20** Would I Lie to You? **3.0** Would I Lie to You? **3.40** Would I Lie to You? **4.20** Top Gear **6.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **6.40** QI XL **7.40** Would I Lie to You? The Unseen Bits **8.20** QI **9.0** Would I Lie to You? **9.40** QI **10.20** Would I Lie to You? **11.0** Just Jokes **12.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **1.0** Mock the Week **1.40** QI **2.15** QI **2.45** Would I Lie to You? The Unseen Bits **3.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **7.30** Black-ish **9.0** The Goldbergs **11.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** FILM The Next Karate Kid (1994) **4.05** Shrek the Halls **4.40** Modern Family **5.35** The Big Bang Theory **7.30** Modern Family **8.0** Modern Family **8.30** Modern Family **9.0** Gogglebox **10.0** FILM Get Out (2017) **12.05** Naked Attraction **1.10** Naked Attraction **2.15** Gogglebox **3.15** Summer House **4.05** Ramsay's Hotel Hell **4.55** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Film4

11.0am FILM Jingle All the Way (1996) Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. **12.45** FILM The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) Fantasy adventure, starring Georgie Henley and Skandar Keynes. **2.55** FILM Bumblebee (2018) Transformers prequel, starring Hailee Steinfeld. **5.10** FILM Addams Family Values (1993) Comedy, starring Anjelica Huston and Raul Julia. **6.55** FILM Eddie the Eagle (2016) Biopic of ski jumper Eddie Edwards, starring Taron Egerton.* **9.0** FILM Venom (2018) Fantasy adventure, starring Tom Hardy. **11.10** FILM Bad Times at the El Royale (2018) Mystery thriller, starring Jeff Bridges. **2.0** FILM Joy Ride (2001) Thriller, starring Steve Zahn and Paul Walker.

ITV2

6.0am Unwind With ITV **6.25** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **6.50** Love Bites **7.50** Secret Crush **8.45** In for a Penny **9.10** Celebrity Catchphrase **10.15** FILM The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part (2019) **12.20** FILM Ella Enchanted (2004) **2.25** In for a Penny **2.55** Alan Carr's Epic Gameshow: Celebrity Special **3.55** Catchphrase: Catchiest Moments **5.0** FILM Space Jam (1996) **6.45** FILM Back to the Future (1985) **9.0** FILM Knocked Up (2007) **11.40** Family Guy **12.10** Family Guy **12.40** American Dad! **1.10** American Dad! **1.35** Shopping With Keith Lemon **2.0** Shopping With Keith Lemon **2.30** Don't Hate the Playaz **3.10** Dress to Impress **4.0** Take Me Out **5.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **5.35** Unwind With ITV

Sky Max

6.0am Bondi Rescue **7.0** Little Mix Live **9.0** The 80s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **10.0** Red Rising Hood: After Ever After **11.0** Harry Potter: A Who's Who of the Wizarding World **12.0** Football's Funniest Moments **2.0** The Rising **10.0** TV's Greatest Gameshows **12.0** We're Here **1.10** The Russell Howard Hour **2.10** Jurassic Greatest Moments: Jurassic Park to Jurassic World **3.05** Tom Cruise: Movie Maverick **4.0** Road Wars **5.0** Highway Patrol **5.30** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts

6.0am Three Tenors: From Caracalla to the World **8.0** Tales of the Unexpected **8.30** Tales of the Unexpected **9.0** The Agatha Christie Hour **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **10.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Joan Fontaine **12.0** Sam Cooke: A Legend in Concert **1.20** André Rieu: Welcome to My World **2.20** FILM Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (1999) **4.0** Wonderland: The Story of Christmas **5.0** The Agatha Christie Hour **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **6.30** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** Simon & Garfunkel: Concert in Central Park **9.0** Paul Simon: Graceland – The African Concert **11.0** Simon & Garfunkel: The Harmony Game **12.30** Beach Boys: Good Vibrations Tour **1.30** Queen: Live at the Rainbow **3.10** Toto: 40 Tours Around the Sun

This England, Sky Atlantic

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Storm City **7.0** Storm City **7.55** Game of Thrones **8.55** Game of Thrones **10.0** Landscapers **2.0** This England **3.20** This England **4.25** This England **5.30** This England **6.30** This England **7.30** This England **9.0** Game of Thrones **1.35** Gomorrah **2.35** Gomorrah **3.35** In Treatment **4.05** True Blood **5.05** Storm City

Radio

Radio 3

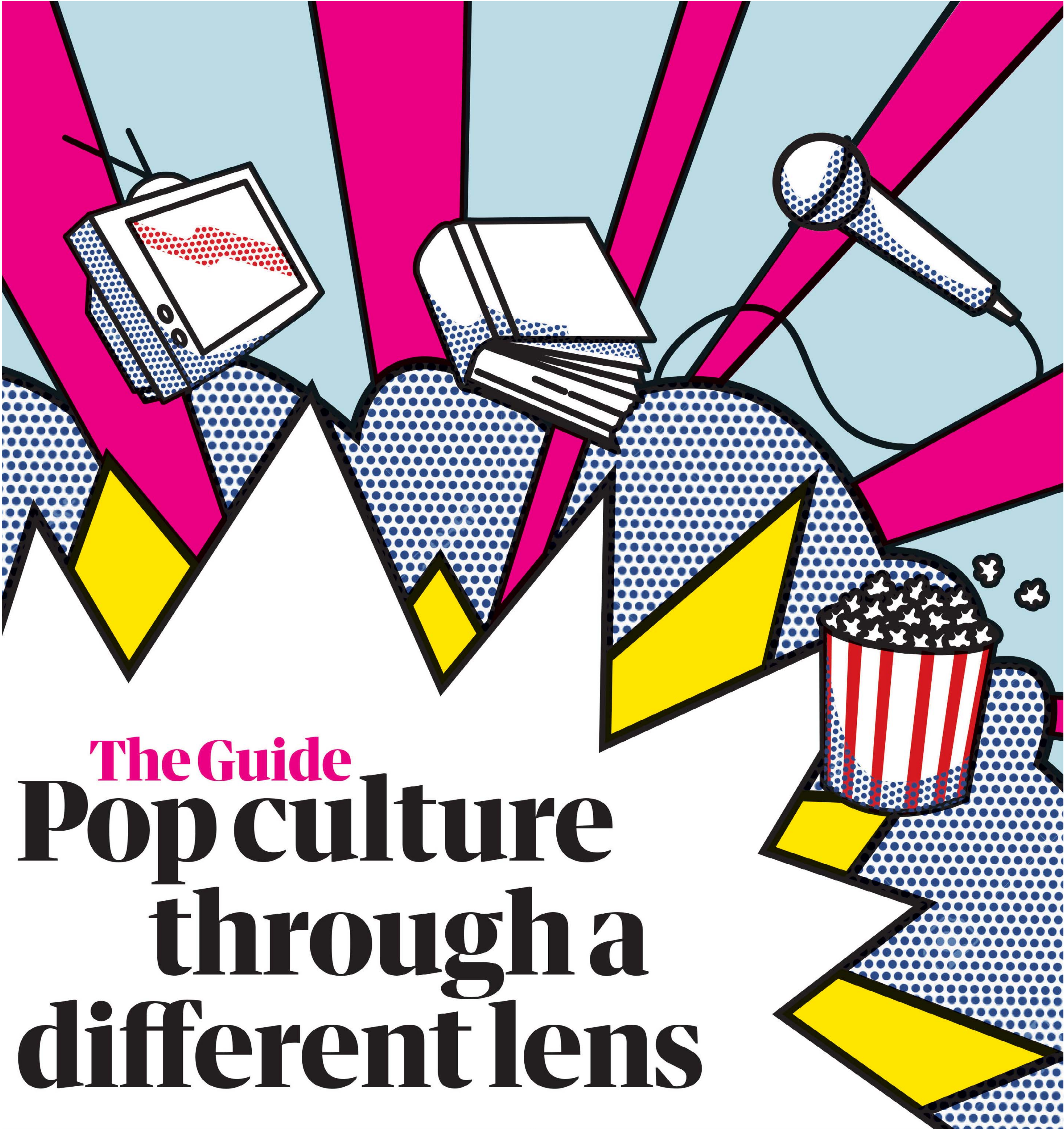
6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: More One Hit Wonders. Vittorio Monti and Joaquín Rodrigo. (5/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. Violist Timothy Ridout and pianist Frank Dupree play Bridge's Pensiero and Appassionato, and Kreisler's Praeludium and Allegro. **2.0** Afternoon Concert. The final part of Haydn's The Seasons, Winter, from the Vienna SO. Plus, Marin Alsop conducts Janáček's Sinfonietta. **4.30** The Listening Service (R) **5.0** New Generation Artists. Baritone James Newby and pianist Joseph Middleton perform Schubert's Winterreise. **6.15** Words and Music (R) **7.30** Proms at Christmas 2022. Beethoven's Missa Solemnis, with John Eliot Gardiner and the Monteverdi Choir, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, soprano Lucy Crowe, mezzo Ann Hallenberg, tenor Giovanni Sala and bass William Thomas. (R) **8.50** Proms at Christmas 2022. Metropole Orkest showcase South African jazz. (R) **11.0** Late Junction **1.0** Ultimate Calm. With guest Sigrid. (R) **2.0** Ultimate Calm. With guest Ry X. (R) **3.0** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** Desert Island Discs (R) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Giving Up the Ghost (5/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** The Truth About Jazz (R) **11.30** Ed Reardon at Christmas (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** Pick of the Year: 2022 **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Causing a Scene. Carol Morley and Hossein Amini discuss the dream sequence. (5/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Firewall (5/8) **2.45** Why Do We Do That? Why humans seem more biased towards negative information. **3.0** Gardeners' Question Time **3.45** Short Works. Lost and Found, by Gillian Shearer. **4.0** Last Word **4.30** Mastertapes: Wilko Johnson (The A-Side) (R) **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **6.0** News **6.15** The News Quiz **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Screenshot. Akira Kurosawa's enduring influence in cinema. (4/9) **8.0** Correspondents' Look Ahead: Looking Ahead to 2023. **8.50** A Point of View. **9.0** Neil Gaiman and the BBC Symphony Orchestra (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Marple – Three New Stories. The Unravelling, by Natalie Haynes. (10/10) **11.0** Great Lives (R) **11.30** Edward Thomas and the Pocket Book of Poems and Songs for the Open Air (R) **12.0** News **12.15** Wild Bond. Emily Knight chooses animals with the best gadgets. (5/5) **12.30** Book of the Week: Giving Up the Ghost (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** One to One (R)

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Trueman and Riley (4/4) **6.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (4/4) **7.0** Last Christmas (4/5) **7.15** Good News Stories (4/5) **7.30** Count Arthur Strong's Radio Show! **8.0** Parsley Sidings (5/10) **8.30** Bristow (1/4) **9.0** Act Your Age (5/6) **9.30** Millport (1/6) **10.0** The Lady Vanishes **11.0** Trueman and Riley (4/4) **11.30** A Charles Paris Mystery (4/4) **12.0** Last Christmas (4/5) **12.15** Good News Stories (4/5) **12.30** Count Arthur Strong's Radio Show! **1.0** Parsley Sidings (5/10) **1.30** Bristow (1/4) **2.0** Act Your Age (5/6) **2.30** Millport (1/6) **3.0** The Lady Vanishes **4.0** Trueman and Riley (4/4) **4.30** A Charles Paris Mystery (4/4) **5.0** Last Christmas (4/5) **5.15** Good News Stories (4/5) **5.30** Count Arthur Strong's Radio Show! **6.0** Parsley Sidings (5/10) **6.30** Bristow (1/4) **7.0** Act Your Age (5/6) **7.30** Millport (1/6) **8.0** Burn Slush! The Reindeer Grand Prix **8.30** Soul Music **9.0** Hilarious Histories: What's So Funny About the Past? (3/3) **10.0** The Confessional (3/6) **10.30** The Beauty of Britain (1/6) **11.0** Penny Dreadfuls: Brothers Faversham (4/4) **11.30** James Acaster's Perfect Sounds **12.0** Doctor Who: The War Doctor (3/12) **1.0** The Lady Vanishes **2.0** Trueman and Riley (4/4) **2.30** A Charles Paris Mystery: Star Trap (4/4) **3.0** Last Christmas (4/5) **3.15** Good News Stories (4/5) **3.30** Count Arthur Strong's Radio Show! **4.0** Parsley Sidings (5/10) **4.30** Bristow (1/4) **5.0** Act Your Age (5/6) **5.30** Millport (1/6)



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The Guardian Newsletters

Driverless cars? Pah! We have driverless government now *Marina Hyde, page 3*

To the media, all striking workers are 'the enemy within' *Ken Capstick, page 4*

Christmas is happier now that I'm a mother *Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett, page 5*

Journal

Opinion and ideas

Times are tough, but all of us have reasons to be cheerful

Jonathan Freedland

There is light in the midwinter gloom. It can take great effort to see it, when so many gathering this weekend will struggle to maintain more than a forced, say-cheese smile. We all know the reasons: rocketing energy bills, rising rents and mortgage payments, real pay going down, food bank use going up, an NHS buckling under the strain, strikes debilitating some of our most essential services, a brutal war in Europe, and a climate crisis already wreaking havoc in the here-and-now.

And yet while 2022 brought plenty to weigh down the heart, it also offered some unexpected lifts to the spirit. These past 12 months showed that, despite everything, there are reasons to be hopeful.

Start with home, and a reminder that this time last year the country was still saddled with Boris Johnson and a Conservative party with no apparent bottom to the behaviour it was prepared to tolerate. Even after the first revelations, and lies, about Downing Street partying during lockdown, it seemed neither embarrassment nor his colleagues would budge Johnson: he was blessed with the peculiar strength of the man who lacks all shame.

But Johnson will spend this Christmas neither in Downing Street nor Chequers. He was ejected from power in disgrace, ousted by his own party. Yes, he is coining it - a million quid for four speeches - and there is talk of a comeback but, for now, he is not where he wanted to be. He is the politician who won a big victory - and squandered it.

It was our system, rickety and flawed as it is, that did that. And when Liz Truss decided to subject the country to a lunatic, Ayn Rand-style experiment in glory-to-the-rich economic dogma, it dispatched her with even greater alacrity. Conservatives behaved appallingly, of course - electing Johnson in the first place, indulging Truss even for a month - but in the end, however belatedly and self-servingly, they did what had to be done.

In the US, that task fell to the voters. Republicans in Congress never used their power to remove Donald Trump, even after he had incited a violent insurrection. They embraced his election denialism and joined his assault on democracy. But in November's midterm contests, Americans bucked both precedent and the polls to reject him and his acolytes. The mini-Trumps were defeated, from New Hampshire to Arizona, thus diminishing the man himself. Trump is now what he fears being most: a confirmed loser.

The humbling of Johnson and Trump were encouraging signs not only of democratic resilience but also of the global retreat of the nationalist-populists. Not everywhere: Benjamin Netanyahu is back in power in Israel atop a coalition that includes those once shunned as

Times are tough, but all of us have reasons to be cheerful

Jonathan Freedland

← Continued from front

part of the untouchable, racist right. But in Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro joined the rejects club, and in France Marine Le Pen reconfirmed her membership. If those seem like slim reasons to be cheerful, think how you'd feel if the results had gone the other way.

Meanwhile, the man admired by so many of the world's would-be autocrats emerges from 2022 a shrunken figure. Vladimir Putin assumed that he merely had to give the order to invade Ukraine to become the master of that land and its people, a new Peter the Great. Instead, Russia's smaller, defiant neighbour confounded his plans and reminded the west of some truths it had perhaps forgotten: that for all its many well-documented failings and hypocrisies, the west's brand of freedom and democracy is preferable to the alternative - the aggression and brutality of a tyrant.

Even wars and fallen empires can seem trivial next to the problem that dwarfs all others: the climate emergency. Who cares about borders if the planet itself is burning? November's Cop summit did not deliver all that activists had hoped for, but 2022 offered a glimpse of how we may emerge from this crisis all the same. This month US scientists announced a breakthrough in the quest for a carbon-free source of energy, by proving in principle that nuclear fusion can work. Caveats abound: chiefly, whether it will be possible to move from "proof of concept" to generating usable energy on a mass scale, and to do it in time, given the pace of global heating. Still, there is relief in witnessing a step in the right rather than wrong direction.

The same is true of the advance hailed on these pages by my colleague George Monbiot as "perhaps the most important environmental technology ever developed". Precision fermentation - a refined form of brewing - is a new form of food production, creating replacements for meat, eggs, milk and fish, that would consume a tiny fraction of the Earth's resources. Again, there are misgivings. But after years of alarm over whether the human race could ever get out of the hole it has dug itself, 2022 brought an intimation of what a solution might look like.

This autumn I had a conversation with the writer and renowned optimist Malcolm Gladwell. I told him that sometimes the news, about the climate crisis especially, could get me down, that it was hard to look at the world and not feel bleak. Recall, he replied, that if in 1945 you were black and lived in Los Angeles and tried to go to the beach, you got arrested. If in 1970 you were a woman who wanted to be a flight attendant, "you had to parade in front of a group of men who took your measurements, and if you didn't have a perfect figure, and weren't white and under the age of 32, you didn't get the job". That was not so long ago. In other words, change happens. Or as Gladwell put it, "Every time I pick up a history book, I feel better about the present day."

So I look at our politics, and while I could despair over the epic mistake that was Brexit, for these few festive days I choose to take solace in the fact that the penny is clearly dropping: this week an outlet as mainstream as ITV News unflinchingly detailed the ways in which our EU exit has made us poorer. I look at our politicians, and while I could despair over Jacob Rees-Mogg or Suella Braverman, I marvel instead at, say, Gordon Brown, whom I saw in a Fife warehouse this summer, doing his bit for an extraordinary project that takes unwanted items returned to Amazon and other firms, goods that would otherwise be dumped in landfill, and puts them in the hands of the neediest. Or I think of the Guardian readers I spoke to last weekend, some of them really feeling the squeeze, who nevertheless were stretching to make the largest donation they could to our annual charity appeal.

You may call it sentimental, but I think it is hard-headed and rooted in evidence. As 2022 gives way to 2023, there are grounds for hope. In these final days of the year, as we draw breath, let that be the ground we stand on.

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'Comment is free… but facts are sacred' CP Scott

Religion

In the refugee debate, the Church of England is a bulwark of decency

After a challenging year, the Anglican hierarchy was afforded some light relief last week by Jonathan Gullis, the reliably belligerent Conservative MP for Stoke-on-Trent North. Taking exception to the archbishop of Canterbury's excoriation of the government's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, Mr Gullis discerned a troubling modern tendency to use "the pulpit to preach from". Justin Welby responded that he appreciated the feedback and looked forward to advice on more appropriate pulpit activity.

This Christmas, as a sobering 2022 draws to a close, Lambeth Palace can be forgiven for indulging in some festive humour at Mr Gullis's expense. Last month, census results indicated that, for the first time, less than half the population of England and Wales described themselves as Christian. Separate figures revealed a steep fall in numbers attending Anglican services. Respect for the late queen's devout faith meant that the Church of England's established status was never truly brought into question. But in the post-Elizabethan era, serious scrutiny seems inevitable - especially in the context of eventual House of Lords reform.

That will be a necessary debate for another day. Right now, the presence of the lords spiritual at Westminster has clear benefits. At a time when the government is attempting to sell performative cruelty towards migrants as a form of humanitarian intervention, the Anglican bishops, led by Mr Welby, deserve considerable praise for insisting on telling it how it is.

Devoting the archbishop's annual debate in the Lords this month to the issue, Mr Welby attacked the "harmful rhetoric" that is allowing asylum seekers to be dehumanised, referring to the inflammatory language of "invasion", used by the home secretary, Suella Braverman. This followed a scathing Easter sermon at Canterbury Cathedral, in which he denounced the Home Office's offshoring plans as unworthy of "a country formed by Christian values".

It is, of course, unsurprising that some Conservative MPs have taken umbrage at the ecclesiastical onslaught, accusing the C of E of ethical grandstanding. John Redwood has accused the archbishop of fomenting political discord while offering no solutions. But in his Lords speech, Mr Welby explicitly identified the danger of loftily moralising without confronting the complexities that politicians are required to face. The bishops have highlighted the need to expand safe, legal routes and accelerate the processing of claims. The need to balance generosity and compassion with efficient control of borders has been acknowledged.

Nevertheless, in a certain sense, Mr Gullis's reference to preaching from pulpits identified something important. The manner in which the C of E has spoken about refugees has indeed been profoundly moral, in a way that has dangerously eluded the secular political debate. Over the past year - amid arguments about deterrence, logistics, the cost of accommodation and deportations, and the speed of the asylum application process - the humanity of the individuals arriving on our shores has been almost lost to view. That the illegal, indecent squalor recently exposed at the Manston asylum centre in Kent should ever have been tolerated was an indication of where that can lead.

By reminding us that "recognition of human dignity is the first principle which must underpin our asylum policy", and of the need to "see the faces of those in need and listen to their voices", Mr Welby's Lords speech highlighted what must be the starting point of all refugee policy. This is not mere naivety, at odds with the real world. It is to ground our engagement with that world on an ethical footing. The archbishop of Canterbury has performed a valuable service in pointing that out to a political class that has lost touch with the basics.

Pantomime

There's nothing like a dame to beat the blues, especially if it's Sir Ian McKellen

The actor Sir Ian McKellen and the comedian John Bishop are stepping out on to the West End stage over Christmas in the matriarch of all pantomimes, Mother Goose. They have already been to Brighton and before their unusually long season is over they will have played in six more cities, from Liverpool to Dublin, finishing in Cardiff on April Fools' Day.

The pairing of a mid-career comic and a beloved octogenarian classical actor is a twist on the time-honoured tradition of roping in crowd-pulling celebrities to fatten up theatre's own golden-egg-laying goose. A trip to see panto has become an annual family and school outing, underwriting the theatre world's overheads for the rest of the year, hence the dismay when the Covid pandemic laid waste last year's season.

here have been other arrivistes on the pantomime scene: Aladdin, in 1861, gave us Widow Twankey, in a story taken from the 1001 Nights; Jack and the Beanstalk, in 1886, gave us Dame Durden (later Trott), in a borrowing from English fairytale. But Mother Goose, played by Sir Ian as the owner of a financially imperilled animal sanctuary in the redundant Debenhams building on Oxford Street in London, predates them all, in a show derived from an ancient fable that keeps on giving.

Its pantomime pedigree goes back to 1806, when the celebrated Regency clown Joseph Grimaldi upstaged Harlequin in a commedia dell'arte-derived confection which, much to its creator's surprise, ran for 92 nights at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, and raked in £20,000 (more than £1.5m in today's money). Grimaldi's handwritten script of the final scenes of Harlequin and Mother Goose is among the treasures held by the Library of Birmingham.

However, it was the ageing music hall star Dan Leno who, in 1902, elevated the cross-dressing Mother Goose into today's flamboyantly outfitted purveyor of double entendres. Batting away misgivings about who is laughing at whom, there are now specialist dames, often with strong local ties and their own catchphrases, such as Berwick Kaler's "Me babbies, me bairns". Kaler was lured out of retirement for The Adventures of Granny Goose in York this year, while Clive Rowe, who has described Mother Goose as "the Hamlet of panto", is currently playing his 15th at London's Hackney Empire.

There are reasons why some stories survive. This morality tale about the dangers of greed and impatience, attributed to Aesop in the sixth century BC, has hissed its truth through more than two millennia. In recent decades, it has been co-opted as a metaphor for political short-termism on both the left and the right. The McKellen-Bishop Mother Goose, scripted by the Liverpudlian Jonathan Harvey, includes a pig in a school tie called Boris, a baddie named Cruella Braverman and lots of couplets rhyming with "Truss".

In this of all years, everyone needs a chance to boo and hiss. Baffling to outsiders - as the New York Times discovered when it recently sent two critics out on the circuit - pantomime is a populist art form that speaks of and for the people in all their folly and vivacity. It's silly and rude, with fabulous frocks. Long may it continue to lay its golden eggs.

Driverless cars? Pah! We now have driverless government

Marina Hyde

Christmas week brings an exciting labour market win for Rishi Sunak, as the prime minister finally manages to appoint an ethics adviser. For the past few months, this empty role has begun to look like one of the jobs that British people no longer seem minded to do, like fruit picking or being Nigel Farage's wife. As part of Sunak's commitment to being the change he wants to see, his ethics guy is Sir Laurie Magnus, a former investment banker who won't have the power to launch his own investigations. Maybe this is Sunak's version of a terrible cracker joke.

A full 18 hours into his job, Magnus has yet to stage a wildcat strike, which feels like a rare industrial relations success for the prime minister. For those struggling to keep track of who else is on strike, a useful rule of thumb is that if a secretary of state has dressed up as one on a visit this year, they are now taking industrial action.

Senior politicians have cosplayed as train drivers, ambulance workers, Border Force officials - the list goes on. We've yet to see health secretary Steve Barclay in a nurse's uniform, though do assume that the reason a politician tucks their tie into their shirt when they visit hospitals is to prevent someone grabbing them by it and asking them what on earth they actually meant when they ostentatiously clapped for carers. It says a lot that you can be booked for sarcastic applause in football, but in politics it can see you promoted.

As for how it's all going down with the public, the Chinese this week unveiled an ultra-deepwater drillship that will be able to plumb twice the depth at which the Titanic rests, though that still leaves the Conservative poll rating just beneath its reach. With the country settling into a kind of perma-rage that nothing much works any more, there is something mesmeric about the government's attempts to insist its dignity hasn't been compromised, and that it has taken back control of the taking back control. The party's chaos machine has spewed out just the three prime ministers this year, yet Sunak's appearance before the liaison committee this week appeared to downplay this farce to the equivalent of a few substitutions in your shopping order. Sorry, Downing Street contains the following substitutions: 1xLizTruss for 1xBorisJohnson, 1xRishiSunak for 1xLizTruss, 1xEvenWorseEconomicProspects for 1xBadEconomic Prospects.

Rishi Sunak on a a visit to Harland & Wolff shipyard factory in Belfast. The company faced wildcat strikes at a Scottish facility earlier this year

PHOTOGRAPH: CHARLES MCQUILLAN/ PA

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What Just Happened?! *by Marina Hyde is available from guardian bookshop.com, priced £16.99*

> **Many people are joining the strikes, somehow unpersuaded that their reclassification as key workers in 2020 was from the heart**

Yet for all the dysfunction and breakdown taking place out there in the place we call reality, Sunak comes across as a sort of prime ministerial chat tool, a state-of-the-art robot whose learned responses are uncannily human-adjacent, but divorced from any sense he meaningfully gets any of it. "I'm really, really robust," he told the liaison committee, which feels like the sort of thing Alexa's software throws up after a slight pause when your kids ask it a rude question.

Then again, perhaps this is where he wishes to take the role. Sunak has long been one of those Silicon Valley-frotters who has swallowed all the bullshit about the possibility of a frictionless world, where tech companies act in concert to provide superior services to the muddle of the state, and politicians like him are willingly reduced to a kind of genial front-of-house role. They are not so much problem-solvers and pathfinders as polished maître-d' figures, selected only because people still like to see a human in a ceremonial front-facing role, even though they know the country is essentially driverless.

It does feel like we're half the way there. The country certainly appears driverless - but mainly in the sense that Brian Harvey's car was when the East 17 singer contrived to run himself over with it.

Of course, the reality of all the tech bros' driverless utopias is that beneath the supposedly unruffled surface are the countless exhausted workers it takes to keep the appearance of seamlessness on the road. A significant number of these are joining the strikes, somehow unpersuaded that their reclassification as "key workers" during the pandemic came from the heart. An early readout of Covid was that middle-class people stayed at home while working-class people brought them stuff. Or saved their lives, or whatever. The current attempt to rebrand key workers as uppity workers is certainly bold. Unfortunately, it's proving quite difficult to shift the perception that all emissaries of the government actively make everything worse. A plan to include ministers among volunteers manning Border Force positions during the walkout has failed to persuade even No 10. A senior government official conceded to Friday's Times: "Having a minister and their entourage is probably the last thing that people need to minimise the disruption."

And that perception feels public sector-wide. As the UK's post-pandemic recovery is revealed to have been even weaker than previously thought, it's almost as if ministers dressing up in the clothes of people who do essential jobs has reached its limits as a pageantry strategy. The UK is the only G7 country not to have regained the ground lost during the lockdown, with seemingly no politician willing to face up to an answer or range of answers as to why that may be. The government comes across as something events happen to, rather than because of, except in a negative way. Still, nurses yesterday announced further strikes next month, so perhaps some of them could dress up as politicians for a day and go on a site visit to Westminster to man the frontline themselves. It's increasingly difficult to see how they could do any worse.

To the media, all striking workers are 'the enemy within'

Ken Capstick

When mineworkers took strike action in 1984 to save their industry from a government policy aimed at its total destruction, Margaret Thatcher was quick to refer to them and their families as the "enemy within". As strikes take place across Britain now, the current government's response echoes the past.

Whether it be rail workers, train drivers, Royal Mail workers, barristers, postal workers, refuse workers, London Underground workers, air transport workers or our wonderful NHS nurses, the government finds itself determined to force through real-terms cuts in wages. These cuts in working-class living standards follow continued cuts since the financial crash of 2008, a crash not brought about by those who suffered most, but for which they continue to pay the price.

During the pandemic, we saw Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak standing on the steps of Downing Street applauding our courageous NHS workers and urging the rest of the nation to do the same, while staff inside No 10 enjoyed beer- and wine-swilling parties. How long will it be before our NHS workers are called the enemy within?

Many of those taking action today are fighting not only for increased wages, but to save their industries, just as the miners did in 1984 and 1985. The constant cuts to our NHS and the privatisation by stealth of our health services represent a threat to its existence and to the nation's health. Aneurin Bevan's dream of a health service that was free to everyone who needed it is being whittled away, little by little, by people who never liked it in the first place, in the hope that no one notices until it is gone.

Many workers are being offered pay increases way below the rate of inflation. The latest offer to rail workers is 8%, spread over two years. That's only 4% in each of the two years. The retail prices index (RPI) stands at 14%, so this offer amounts to a real-terms pay cut of 10%. Even if the consumer prices index (CPI) is used as the measure of inflation, now running at 10.7%, the offer is still a considerable real-terms wage cut of 6.7%. Most workers across the UK are being expected to take massive real-terms wage cuts, even while the cost of living is soaring. Heating a typical three-bedroom home will cost £2,100 over the 12 months from October 2022 due to increased energy bills, regardless of the government's cost of living support package.

Ken Capstick *is the former Yorkshire vice-president of the National Union of Mineworkers and currently a trustee of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme (MPS). He is writing here in a personal capacity*

Union leaders have made a compelling case for why strikes are a rational response to the squeeze on living conditions

We usually hear two mantras from government when it makes wage increase offers, or in this case wage decrease offers. First, that the wage cut is "generous" and second that it is all that can be afforded. An MP's salary as at April 2022 was £84,144 a year plus allowances. In contrast, NHS workers, including nurses, have to pay parking charges in hospital car parks while they are at work.

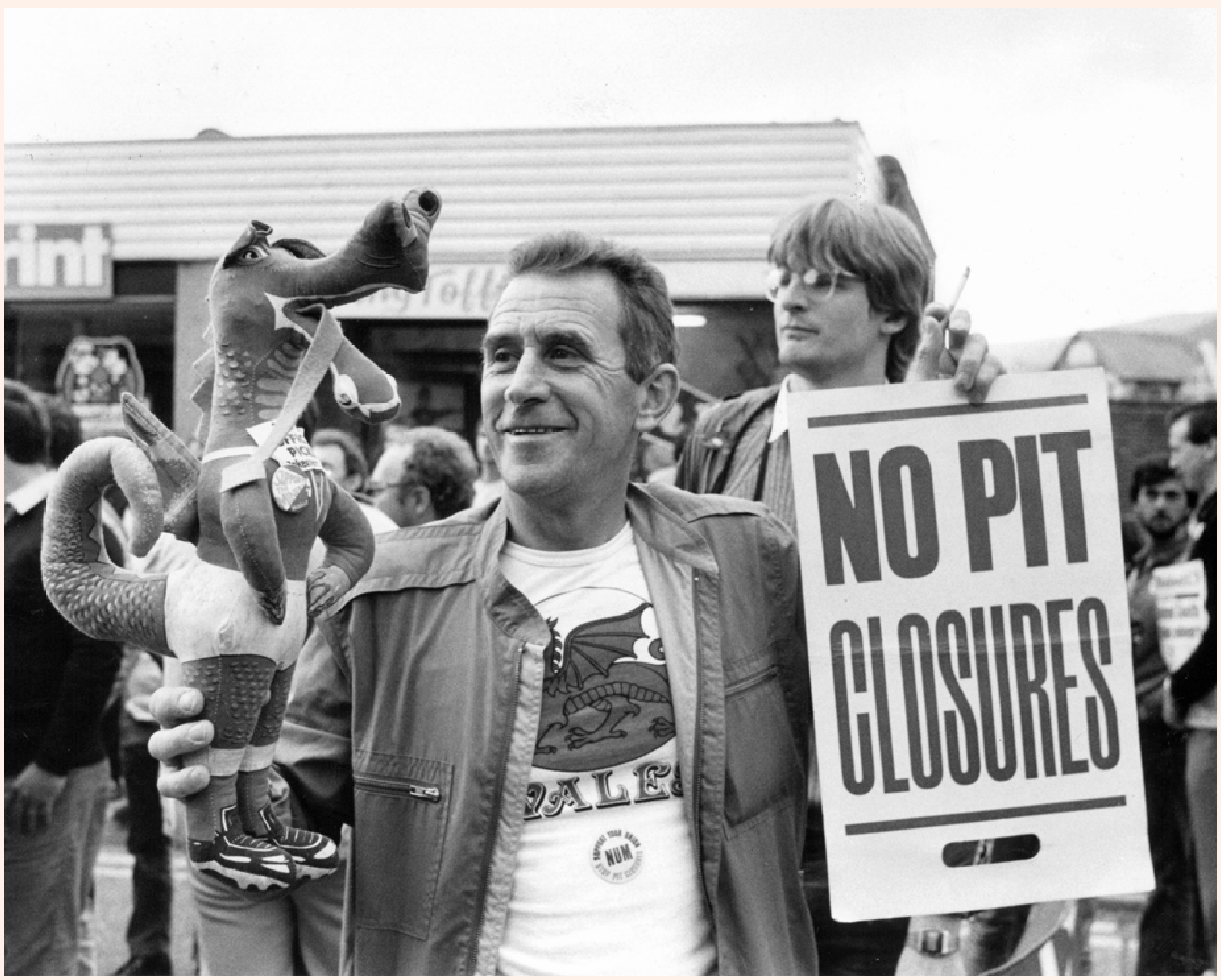
This month, Kelvin MacKenzie, the former editor of the Sun, accused ambulance staff of "organised hatred" for going on strike. Ambulance workers save lives every day. They are dedicated people. Such derision is a naked attempt to draw striking workers into a fruitless low-level exchange that only the tabloids, with their power, can win. If the tabloids and the government are resorting to smearing ordinary people striking against pay cuts as the "enemy within", it means they've already lost the argument.

During the miners' strike we were subjected to daily misleading articles, downright lies and abuse from the gutter press. Yes, sometimes it hurt, but it was always best to ignore it and to try not to stoop to that level. It was far better to use all the means we had to try to present what we believed to be a compelling case every time we had the opportunity. I think the unions have done very well in their dealings with the media; union figureheads such as Mick Lynch have made a calm and compelling case for why strikes are a rational response to this unprecedented squeeze on workers' living conditions.

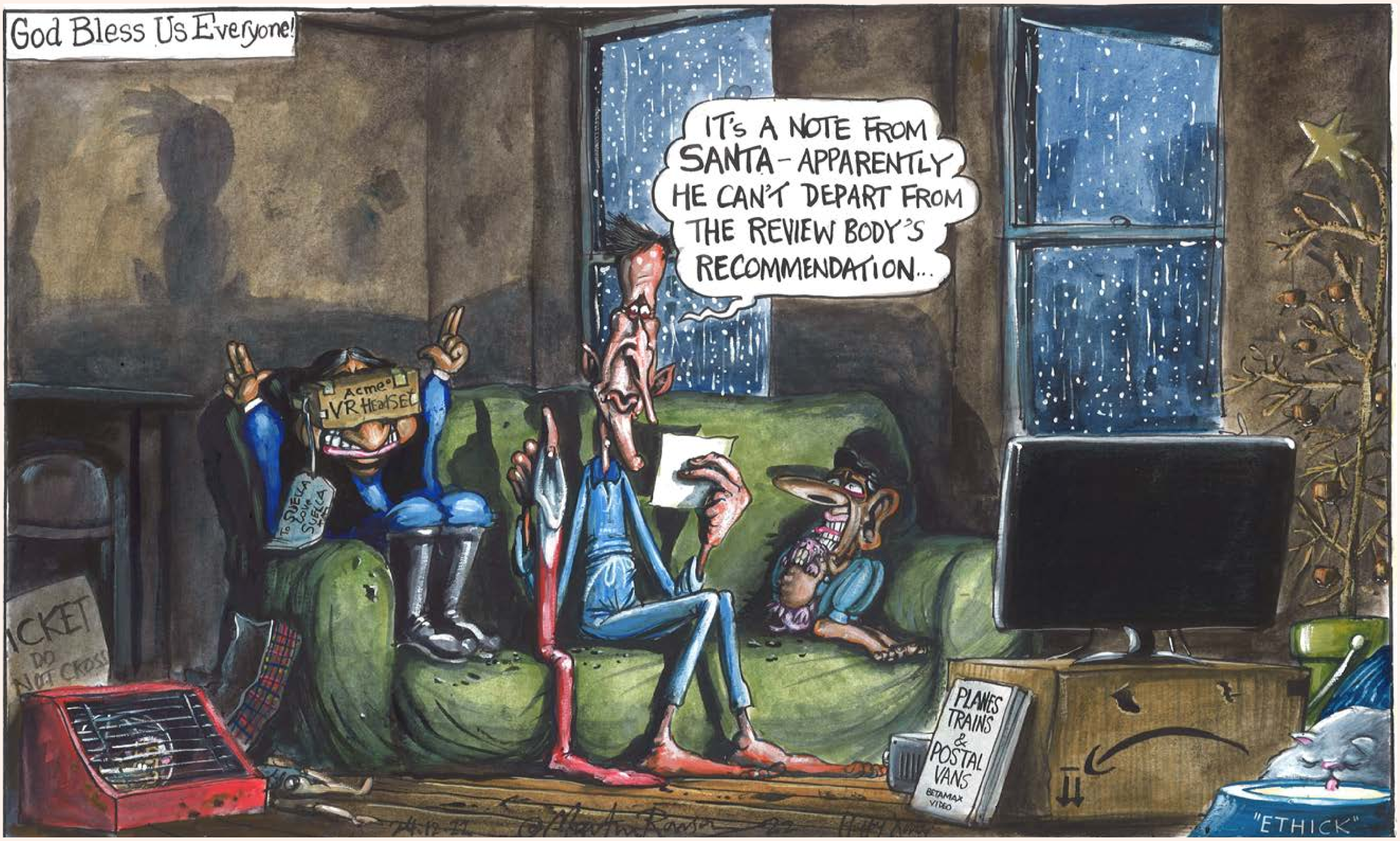
Of course, you still try to counter a false narrative. Criticism that is born out of misunderstanding of the issues must be challenged. It was important during the miners' strike to take every opportunity to present what we believed to be a compelling case.

It would be a dereliction of intelligent thought not to mention Russia's war in Ukraine, which is at the very root of the spiralling inflation we are seeing across Europe. Energy and food prices are important drivers of inflation, along with soaring petrol costs, all of which can be attributed to this unnecessary war, from which there will be no winners. Runaway inflation is causing real hunger, and supporting Ukraine has already cost the UK £2.3bn. The war is a disaster, a sickening loss of life and a complete failure of diplomacy. The search for peace must begin now, or every lost life will be laid at the door of incompetent and obstinate leaders.

The strikes by those working in essential services across Europe are justified in the face of rising living costs and out-of-control inflation brought about by incompetent governments, including our own, which seeks to use the war in Ukraine as a fig leaf to cover its own failures. But the press can't see this - so it sticks to its old, easy, divisive solutions: attacking working people, attacking unions and failing to see how warped and biased coverage perpetuates injustice and heaps hardship on to communities. Those who fought to save their jobs and homes and families in the 1980s look at the rightwing media today and recognise this playbook. I hope that this time the public understands what the unions are fighting for, and see this strategy of sabotage for what it really is.



Striking miners in Pontypridd, 1984 PHOTOGRAPH: KEN SAUNDERS/THE GUARDIAN



Christmas is happier now I'm a mother

Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett

I've been well and truly ambushed by Christmas this year: the tree is only just decorated, and as for the homemade wreath I normally lovingly create with greenery foraged from the neighbourhood – forget it. I'm late on everything, from sending my tax information to my accountant to this column. Owing to illness and the baby forgetting how to sleep without the breast, I have missed every single festive gathering, both personal and professional, including a huge family weekend in a Welsh haunted house, and various literary events. I have drunk precisely one (one!) martini, my first in 18 months, and while I enjoyed it, I would rather have had three, despite everyone knowing that two is the tipping point.

Yet I couldn't be happier. This mad, chaotic singular year, I have felt the meaning of Christmas more than perhaps any other. I am the very essence of joy to the world, peace on Earth, good tidings etc, etc. I haven't even touched my misanthropic Merry Fucking Christmas Spotify playlist, because I don't wish I had a river I could skate away on. I'm happy right here, with my husband and my baby, and though I may roll my eyes during lullaby time when I get to lines such as "holy infant so tender and mild" and "the little Lord Jesus no crying he makes" it is only momentary. This year, I have had a great gift bestowed upon me, the gift of a child, and it has changed everything.

It's not as though I hated Christmas before. I was no Scrooge; I got into the spirit, but I was always acutely aware of the melancholic side to the season, a festival of feasting and light in a darkness that is never entirely absent despite our best efforts, as we think of loved ones we have lost and Christmases past, and feel, or I do anyway, a tug of sadness at the fact that we will never live those innocent childhood memories again. Divorce, bereavement, illness, poverty, pain – all families face challenges, and Christmas can have a tendency to cast them in high relief.

In my case, being a child of divorce with a brother in a care home, it was the scattered nature of my family, so different in its patterns and traditions from the wholesome, conventional groupings we see in adverts, and the stress of travelling from pillar to post to be with everyone I loved in a short window of time, that sometimes made me feel less than jolly. Perhaps this is why my favourite carol is In the Bleak Midwinter. I took a morose joy in the defiant and the non-traditional, the saturnine and the grinchy, the ghostly and the uncomfortable. The darkness at the edge of the toy town.

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Republic of Parenthood
A series exploring some of the philosophical, political and cultural issues around modern parenthood

While it is true that I will never experience a childhood Christmas again, will never fully relive the excitement of my first real tree in its red bucket, with its hot, multicoloured twinkle lights enclosed in little plastic petals, or the anticipation of leaving a wee dram for Santa on the fireplace before heading to bed, I feel that I have been gifted something greater. Because I get to see it through the eyes of my baby son, and I get to devote my time to giving him his first Christmas. From taking him to get the tree, to describing the decorations as he watches me decorate it, and singing carols to him, it's all been magical so far. I've loved dressing him in a Christmas jumper, charity shopping for toys, and choosing the books that will become his favourites.

Most special of all, however, was our trip to see the lights at Kenwood House in north London. We went last year, when I was pregnant with him, my stomach swelling, my walk on its way to becoming a waddle, my fears about Covid and the prospect of giving birth in an understaffed maternity unit frightening me more than I let on as I posed next to the tree. To return with him bursting with excitement at the lights as snowflakes kissed his red, cold cheeks and he kicked his legs as his dad carried him in the sling was one of the best moments of my motherhood so far. Seeing a dad chase his toddler, who had illegally broken into a light installation and was running around, gave me a glimpse of what my life will look like next year. The next morning, I watched my son shake the snow that had fallen overnight from the branches in the garden.

This time of year can be tough for lots of reasons. I'm not suggesting that having a baby can melt it all away, but it does feel as if I've undergone a personal shift. Instead of being haunted by the ghost of Christmas past, I'm embracing the ghost of Christmas future. It's all for him now. All of it.

Letters

No money for nurses as billionaires' wealth rises?

I asked my daughter, a nurse who is 30 years in the job and working on a very busy geriatric ward, what going on strike meant for her. "I will arrive just before 7am, leave at 7.30pm, and take my full 30-minute unpaid meal break," was the reply.

In other words, she will put in the hours she is paid for, instead of arriving 30 minutes early, eating a sandwich while dealing with phones and paperwork, and leaving when she's satisfied everything is running smoothly.

For the last two years, her annual leave has been taken in two- or three-day snatches, whenever staffing allowed. This year, she is determined to take proper, much-needed, week-long breaks. Steve Barclay et al will not be working on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day. She will.

I jokingly asked: "Short of cash?" "No, short of staff," was her reply. For too long the NHS has relied on the goodwill of its staff. Now, they've had enough.

Maureen Tranter
Sheffield

● I spent my working life in the police, mostly as a police officer and lately as a member of support staff. My sister spent hers in the health service as a nurse. I know which of us had the hardest job, most responsibility, lower pay and a lower pension. It wasn't me. In the pandemic, my neighbours and I clapped for people like my sister.

At the beginning of the year I was awarded a 2.1% pay rise – about the same time as the nurses pay review body made its recommendation for their pay rise. My pay rise wasn't anywhere near enough to meet the cost of living crisis, and later in the year it was substantially increased (in my case to 6.75%). The government needs to offer nurses what they gave me, and more besides.

Christopher Sadler
Harleston, Suffolk

● How much longer will ministers parrot the lie that "there's no money" to pay nurses, ambulance workers, rail workers and Border Force staff? There is plenty of money in this country, it is just in the wrong places (Number of UK billionaires up by a fifth since start of pandemic, 19 December).

Joseph and Mary had to trek to Bethlehem for the census so Caesar could tax them more effectively. Then, as now, taxes fell disproportionately on the poor. The baby who arrived on that occasion preached the revolutionary message that all are equal in God's sight. A crucial way of enabling that is a fair tax system. What better Christmas present to the nation than a commitment to a wealth tax, reducing poverty, inequality and division at a stroke?

Rev David Haslam
Evesham, Worcestershire

> **"Ministers parrot the lie that 'there's no money'. There is plenty of money in this country, it is just in the wrong places**
>
> **Rev David Haslam**

● Alan Innes's suggestion (Letters, 19 December) that the government could use the £1.35bn unspent on nurse vacancies to improve the pay offer is unfortunately negated by the huge overspend (estimated at £3bn for doctors and nurses combined) already wasted on expensive agency staff. Much of this could be avoided with a rational staff recruitment and retention policy, and the savings used to pay people properly. Sadly, such a sensible policy is beyond this hapless yet rigidly doctrinaire government.

Dr Richard Carter
London

● Tory attitudes to nurses' pay were satirised in your columns in 1963 by Michael Frayn. He imagines a speech by Christopher Smoothe, minister of chance and speculation: "I've been looking at their preliminary report on wages in what we call the devotional field. Take nursing, for instance – a job that dearly requires unlimited devotion.

"Obviously the general principle here is to make the wages as low as possible to keep out undesirable elements who would otherwise pour into nursing just to make a fast buck. That's obvious – though don't think I'm not on the nurses' side, bless their hearts."

Gavin Ross
Harpenden, Hertfordshire

Rousing display

'On cool days, robins puff out their feathers. The process, called rousing, helps them to stay warm. It fluffs air into down feathers, giving some insulation to help the robin maintain its body temperature'

RIDVAN ERTUG/GUARDIAN COMMUNITY

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The best sporting spectacles, from Laurent Fignon to Chris Brasher

Great bespectacled sporting performances (Letters, 19 December)? Look no further than David Steele, the veteran county professional called up to face the might of Australian fast bowling in 1975. A half-century in his first Test innings, and dogged defence in the remainder of the Ashes series, caught the public imagination to such an extent that "the bank clerk that went to war" was voted BBC sports personality of the year.

Ian Jones
Shrewsbury, Shropshire

● Laurent Fignon raced wearing thin-rimmed, thick-lensed spectacles throughout his professional cycling career, to overall victory in the 1983 and 1984 Tours de France and the 1989 Giro d'Italia. This record, in the most demanding of sports, is matched by a handful of cyclists in the modern era, and none wearing conventional spectacles. His uniquely bookish appearance and Parisian origins set him apart from his fellow roadmen. He was, inevitably, nicknamed Le Professeur.

Robert Lawrence
Oxford

● Chris Brasher was a pacemaker to Roger Bannister's four-minute mile in 1954, and won a steeplechase gold medal in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. He wore spectacles in both races.

Peter Lowthian
Marlow, Buckinghamshire

● I suggest Ray "The Boot" Booty, who was the first cyclist to go under four hours for the 100-mile time trial in 1956. His time of 3:58:28 was more than 11 minutes faster than the second placed rider, and made national headlines at the time.

Bill Hawkes
Canterbury

● Hard to top any of Billie Jean King's 18 grand slam singles titles, or Arthur Ashe's title at the first US Open in 1968. By 1975 he had switched to contact lenses for his Wimbledon title against Jimmy Connors.

Joe Locker
Surbiton, London

● Clive Lloyd hitting a scintillating century against a fearsome Australian bowling attack at Lord's in the 1975 Cricket World Cup final must be a contender, surely?

Matthew Ryder
Buckden, Cambridgeshire

● Not sure which is the greatest bespectacled sporting performance, but every Saturday at Peterborough United we get referees who need glasses.

Toby Wood
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

The vest things in life don't cost £700

I did enjoy Simon Hattenstone's piece on wearing vests (Could a little Prada top at £700 win over our writer?, 17 December). People rarely, and fashion houses never, comment on what clothes feel like. The focus is always on appearance and the status the garment gives the wearer. Like Hattenstone, I find many garments oppressive (too tight, itchy, still stinking of the manufacturing process).

Now that I am 65, I have rediscovered the childhood comfort of a long vest tucked into voluminous knickers. Combined cost of cosy vest and knicker combo: £6 from the Grainger market in Newcastle.

Gina Crowley
Victoria Garesfield, Tyne & Wear

● When I was a teenager in the mid-1960s, I "borrowed" a vest from my father, dyed it pink and wore it with white jeans. I was the coolest girl in the village.

Sylvia Pageon
London

Why I avoid parties

I enjoyed your article (How to party, 17 December). I am an introvert, but I have learned how to do small talk. The key is to get the other person to talk about themselves by asking the right questions. However, a missing element in the piece was the issue for anyone with any degree of hearing loss. In crowded, noisy spaces such as parties, pubs and restaurants, it is impossible to follow general conversation. One-to-one small talk becomes impossible and frustrates the other person. Much easier to refuse invitations. So I mostly stay away from parties and enjoy my books.

Sue Craythorne
Kenton, Devon

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Where have all the carol singers gone?

Are carol singers now extinct? Some years ago, early evenings in December were regularly punctuated with a knocked door or rung bell.

Immediately after, the melodic, or more often cacophonous, rendition of Oh Come, All Ye Faithful could be heard. When the exuberant caterwauling could no longer be tolerated, the door was opened.

The little cherubs would then immediately refrain from murdering another carol and hit you with We Wish You a Merry Christmas. This was always (thankfully) the finale, with the expectation of a cash prize.

Depending on the decade, the 3d, 6d, 10p or, more recently, 50p (for each vocalist), was either greeted with a cheery smile or the sombre look of disappointment - depending on whether your reward fell below the evening's market average.

Maybe children no longer know any carols, or they're at home still eating the sweets you gave them at Halloween.

Gary Freestone
Leicester

● Talking to my neighbours, I found that many of them have been too afraid to adorn the outsides of their flats or houses with Christmas lights this year as they have done in previous years because they have soaring electricity bills.

So the Tories have even dampened that Christmas spirit!

Alan Lafferty
London

The Russification of eastern Europe

I heartily concur with Timothy Garton Ash's comments concerning the insidious imposition of the Russian language on areas that Vladimir Putin anachronistically considers to be part of the Russian empire (The greatest threat to the Russian world is Putin himself, 17 December).

The Federation of Poles in Great Britain has recently been drawing attention to the growing Russification in Belarus, where Putin's brutal sidekick, Alexander Lukashenko, has been championing the spread of Russian in Belarusian schools, threatening to limit the Belarusian language to the teaching of history only, and closing down the Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian language schools that, in accordance with article 50 of the Belarusian constitution, had flourished in the areas where these indigenous minorities lived.

Now even Russian-speaking members of the opposition in Belarus are teaching themselves to speak Belarusian, as they identify this neglected language as the voice of democracy. Another side-effect of Putin's Russian chauvinism.

Wiktor Moszczynski
Brentford, London

● A very perceptive article by Timothy Garton Ash as usual. But surely a much closer and more informative analogy to Russia/Ukraine is Britain/Ireland rather than Britain/India? The cultural, social, political intertwinings are much more similar, as are strategic concerns.

Jan Maciejowski
Cambridge

Births and deaths

Morwenna Ferrier's article ('I knew my mother was dying, but I didn't expect her to time it so spectacularly', 17 December) rang emotive bells for me, as my father died in the middle of my first child's christening party, which was on our first wedding anniversary. However, unlike Morwenna's sad tale, I was not traumatised, perhaps because our death was unexpected.

Dad had come to see his latest grandchild, but had a stroke while with us and spent his final days in hospital. I feel his death was a good one - we had several days to get used to the idea that he was leaving us, and he was not in any pain. I was so glad he was conscious and recognised Kevin when I took him to visit in his christening gown. Kevin's birth had been more traumatic, as he was eight weeks early, but the coincidence of these events signalled for us the changing of the generations. "Every moment dies a man, / Every moment one is born", wrote Tennyson in The Vision of Sin.

John Bibby
York

Corrections and clarifications

● The production of Yerma in which Billie Piper appeared was at the Young Vic, not the National (Miserable? Me?, 3 December, Saturday magazine, p18).

● The seven-letter name of a bridge we were looking for in a Weekend crossword (17 December, Saturday magazine, p94, 15 across) is upstream from Westminster bridge (the answer to 6 across, 5 down), not downstream as the clue said.

● The perfect chocolate roulade recipe was muddled by step 3 that advised baking the base in a clingfilm-lined tray. The main text had the correct instruction to use greaseproof paper (17 December, Feast, p18).

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to guardian.readers@theguardian.com or The readers' editor, **Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU**. You can also leave a voicemail on **020 3353 4736**

Recalling a Kwality chicken tikka masala

I have a clear recollection of eating chicken tikka masala in August 1971 in Delhi, India. It was with my parents in Kwality restaurant in the then Connaught Place area (Ali Ahmed Aslam, inventor of chicken tikka masala, dies at 77, theguardian.com, 21 December).

Sanjay Batra
London

● Re your report on feisty 95-year-olds (Age before duty…, 22 December), my mother at 99 fell in her back garden and lay there for an hour before luckily being seen by a neighbour. To the question "Why didn't you press your pendant for help?", she answered, "Oh that's just for emergencies". Fortunately, it was a sunny day.

Margaret Bruce
Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

● A small step forward (Council uses new rules to issue fine for harassment, 21 December). Many steps backwards as Jeremy Clarkson goes scot free.

Penny McPhillips
Garstang, Lancashire

● Well done for managing "business as normal" despite the serious ransomware IT attack (Report, 22 December). If the ransom required really was just two killer sudokus and a codeword, I think you got off lightly.

Catherine Burchell
Sheffield

● Just a brief letter to express my disappointment at the lack of brief letters on Thursday. More's the pithy.

Adrian Brodkin
London

Established 1906

Country diary
Welburn, North Yorkshire

The sun has stalled. Solstice is from the Latin *sol* and *sistere,* meaning to stand still. In December, the hiatus is around our star's southernmost rising and setting points, and appears to last about two weeks to the naked-eye observer. In the northern hemisphere, it brings us the shortest of daylight hours. There weren't enough today and we finished our afternoon walk in gathering dark to the sound of avian roosting rituals, and the nightly round of blackbird pseudo-alarm calls - the passerine equivalent of crying wolf to startle others into vacating favoured spots.

By 10 o'clock, the cold is clean and sharp as a surgical blade, and frost dazzles like diamond dust by torchlight. Nothing stirs in branch, briar or bracken, and the moon is yet to appear, but the night is vivid with something larger than life.

The Milky Way is visible as the faintest smudge, aligned with our lane. My beloved Sirius, Technicolor glitterball and jazziest light in the sky, has risen in the south-east. Mars dazzles gold over Taurus. Orion lurches like a festive drunk, and above them all, the seven sisters of the Pleiades dance their deep time, nuclear ring-a-roses. Earlier this year in the British Museum, I saw them crafted in gold alongside the sun and moon on the astonishing Nebra sky disc: the world's oldest known depiction of astronomical phenomena. A golden arc on the rim of the disc appears to accurately represent the 82-degree angle between the summer and winter solstices at the latitude where the disc was found.

My breath catches when a new light streaks east to south, scoring the night with white gold. The ensuing meteor shower (the Geminids) includes several of the brightest, longest-lived, longest-tailed I've ever seen. I mention it on social media and discover others are gazing up too, from bedroom windows and gardens, and most enviably, one from a riverside firebath.

I think I'll mark this as the turning of my year. By January, we'll be moving again, out and up. Better to call it now, while I have time to do so, and there are these lights in the dark to remind me that, across time and space, the stars are ours.

Amy-Jane Beer

ILLUSTRATION: CLIFFORD HARPER

Ashley Bickerton

Artist who satirised the get-rich-quick 80s and later our treatment of the natural world

In the 1980s Ashley Bickerton conquered the New York art world, leading a pack of artists who included Jeff Koons and Haim Steinbach in the neo-geo movement, a style that critiqued rampant consumerism. His series of aluminium-and-steel wall sculptures Tormented Self-Portraits (1987-88), lacquered with corporate logos from Fruit of the Loom to Citibank, became totemic of this get-rich-quick era.

Bickerton, who has died aged 63 from complications related to motor neurone disease, knew, however, that such celebrity was fickle and, to the astonishment of many, in 1993 upped sticks to Bali.

There he embarked on a new chapter in his art, far from the eyes of critics and curators. "You just get processed like a taxonomical artefact, like some butterfly with a pin through it," Bickerton said of museums and art journals. "You get labelled, indexed and committed to some construction of 'historic record', and then it all moves on again. It's stifling in every sense."

Instead, inspiration came from more prosaic sources: on a bus travelling up to Acapulco during a trip to Mexico, Bickerton saw a brick wall painted orange and purple. "It was perfect … what could be more perfect than a coloured wall to sit on a [gallery] wall." It resulted in a series of steel, aluminium and resin sculptures, titled Wall-Wall, and featuring primary-coloured brick-like blocks and vinyl text poetically describing natural landscapes. As he sat on the shore with his wife while the tide was going out near their home, the ocean gave up a huge amount of flotsam, natural and human rubbish. That detritus said everything he wanted to say concerning humanity's relationship with both capital and nature. His Flotsam Paintings ended up as dystopian reimaginings of the seascape genre, with bits of collected rubbish embedded in the turquoise oil paint.

> **"Bickerton embarked on a series of paintings featuring the 'Blue Men', repugnant expat westerners**

Island life did not blunt the artist's social satire. Later, Bickerton, once described by the writer Paul Theroux as "the connoisseur of not belonging", embarked on a series of paintings featuring the character of the "Blue Men", repugnant expat westerners. Their skin tone is a knowing nod to the exoticism of Paul Gauguin's 19th-century Tahitian paintings.

In PST2 (2018), Bickerton shows an obese man guffawing on a moped while two miserable local women ride on the back; in The Bar (2018), two men sit at a table littered with empty beer bottles as women smoke, bored, by their side. Each canvas sits in a kitschy frame inlaid with mother of pearl. "My work has always been about identity in some form," Bickerton said. "But, given my unfashionable age, race, gender and orientation, it's not really been encouraged to be seen or discussed that way."

Conceived on a boat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, Bickerton was born in Barbados; his mother, Yvonne, was a behavioural psychologist, and his father, Derek Bickerton, was a peripatetic linguist renowned for his study of creole and pidgin languages. His parents eschewed the international schools favoured by other expats and put him in local schools. "My brother and I were often the only white kids in our school, in Africa, in the Caribbean, and in Guyana in South America … Over the course of my childhood I ended up speaking five dialects of English, none of which was comprehensible to the next."

In 1971 the family finally settled in Hawaii, where Ashley perfected his surfing skills. When he was 21, with American citizenship, he enrolled on the fine art course at the California Institute of the Arts.

In 1984 Bickerton moved to New York, where he had his first solo exhibition, a series of text paintings, at White Columns, before undertaking the independent study programme at the Whitney Museum of American Art a year later. Although he was featured in a group show in 1986 at the Sonnabend Gallery with Koons, Peter Halley and Meyer Vaisman, Bickerton's disillusionment with

Flotsam Painting: Green Sky, part of a dystopian series made by Bickerton, below, while he was living in Bali

ASHLEY BICKERTON. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GAGOSIAN/ STUDIO OF ASHLEY BICKERTON

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the industry was growing. Donald Judd's boxes, he complained, were "discussed in terms of a vessel that held God. But what was it in the end? It was a fucking name brand. These things are traded in some pissing contest among oligarchs." Later he asked: "What the hell was I doing locking myself into an insular feedback loop that lived only to mutely reflect a societal moment?"

Bickerton moved first to the Brazilian state of Bahia, but the waves were not good enough and it proved too difficult to make art, so he went to Bali, Indonesia, building a studio on a mountain near Uluwatu. When not surfing he made art, and in 1997 he showed four paintings in a solo exhibition at White Cube in London, including The Patron, which depicted a slobbish art collector slumped on a sofa masturbating. He had regular commercial gallery shows at the London dealer from then on, as well as in New York with Sonnabend and Lehmann Maupin. More recently Bickerton was represented by Gagosian, but institutional recognition largely passed him by, with just a few turns in museum group shows.

In 1994, however, Damien Hirst curated Some Went Mad, Some Ran Away … at the Serpentine Gallery, London, a group exhibition meditating on life and death that travelled to museums in Helsinki, Hanover and Chicago. Having himself pickled a shark in formaldehyde a year earlier, Hirst included a sculpture by Bickerton titled Solomon Island Shark, made that year, which, with tongue-in-cheek exotica, featured a rubber replica of the giant fish hoisted on a rope and covered in coconuts.

Hirst, whom Bickerton considered an "obnoxious little monster" before they became friends, was to intervene again in Bickerton's career 23 years later, when the British artist opened Newport Street gallery, a non-profit space in London. Bickerton's 2017 retrospective there was followed by an even larger survey later that year at the Flag Art Foundation in New York. The audiences for these shows were divided. "There are those who loved what I did in New York in the 80s and early 90s, and they think I lost the plot when I ran off to Indonesia," Bickerton said. "An equal number of people knew the work I'd done subsequent to coming to Bali and who saw my earlier work and went: 'Hmm, boring'." In truth, while varied, both eras were united by a wicked humour and anthropological interest in how people interact with their environment.

Bickerton is survived by his wife, Cherry Saraswati, daughter, Io, and two sons, Django and Kamahele, as well as his brother, James, and sister, Julie.

Oliver Basciano

Ashley Bickerton, artist, born 26 May 1959; died 30 November 2022

John Mapplebeck

Award-winning director of arts and current affairs programmes for the BBC and ITV

In 1966 the television film-maker John Mapplebeck, who has died aged 86, made an early mark with an item in the BBC2 series New Release on how interest in poetry was flourishing around the work of Basil Bunting in Newcastle.

The project got off to a rocky start when the cameraman said that it was too dark to film the poet walking down the street. The next day the inexperienced director insisted, but noticed the letters SUP on the clapperboard - "shot under protest", the electricians advised him. However, John's idea prevailed, and he went on to direct arts films for TV for more than four decades.

Originally, John had planned to move from radio to television via the current affairs programme Tonight, but when that did not work out he contacted me as producer of New Release. We had worked together in Newcastle, and did so on many subsequent occasions, both for the BBC and later on ITV for The South Bank Show, becoming lifelong friends.

John was not only a working-class intellectual, but a north of England working-class intellectual, inspired by Richard Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy and EP Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class. He learned how to edit programmes as well as make films, and in 1967 went to Manchester to edit the BBC news magazine programme Look North.

Its opposition on Granada was fronted by Michael Parkinson and Bill Grundy. John's drive saw his programme overtake them in audience figures, but inevitably he offended the more established BBC North figures, including the industrial correspondent, who refused to cover an unofficial strike at Liverpool docks. When John got someone else to do it, the correspondent wrote to the BBC hierarchs, saying that John was a "Trotskyist Maoist". This resulted in a "not to be trusted" Christmas tree symbol on John's file.

John went his own way for BBC Arts and BBC Factual: a regional series with the architecture critic Ian Nairn, Nairn's North (1967), was followed by three network series, Nairn at Large (1969), Nairn's Europe (1970) and Nairn Across Britain (1972). The Story of the WPA (1976) told the story of the Works Progress Administration, the agency that implemented President Franklin D Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s.

He then moved to BBC North East and Cumbria as senior producer and became editor of features, responsible for weekly programmes and non-daily news output, including the radical current affairs series Coast to Coast. For The South Bank Show he went to Prague to film the director Miloš Forman (1982).

In 1990 the BBC's strategy for the north of England changed again, and John set up as an independent with Bewick Films. There he made programmes for the BBC and also for the ITV stations Granada, Tyne Tees and Border, winning eight regional and national awards.

One of his films marked the 50th anniversary of the disaster in which 104 miners died at the William Pit, Whitehaven, Cumbria, and others featured the Dalai Lama and the American actor Zero Mostel. Under James Graham, Border Television was making films with Channel 4 in mind, as well as local audiences. Haig: A Scottish Soldier (1994), set out to assess what, in his Presbyterian upbringing in the Scottish borders, had prepared Field Marshal Douglas Haig to absorb the disastrous casualties on the Somme.

John went back to London for a while, to work on The South Bank Show, making films for it on the centenary of the poet WH Auden (2007), David Peace's biography of the football manager Brian Clough, The Damned United (2008), and The Pitmen Painters (2009), Lee Hall's play about the miners and self-taught artists from Ashington, near Newcastle, in the 30s and 40s.

Born in Middlesbrough, John was the only child of Winifred (nee Smith) and Albert Mapplebeck, an engine driver. His early years were spent in Hull, which was heavily blitzed. He left Chapeltown secondary modern school at 15, having failed both his 11-plus and the later selection test at 13, but he was involved in his school's radio station and determined to become a newspaper reporter.

The family moved to Leeds, and while watching a football match John met a sports reporter from the North Leeds News. The reporter was off for his national service the following month, and his job was vacant. Despite the pay being only half that of John's work as a trainee in an upmarket furniture store, his parents allowed him to take the necessary wage cut.

He used a combination of day release and night school to acquire the qualifications for a journalist's training scheme, worked on various West Riding weekly newspapers, undertook national service (1955-57), and arrived back in Leeds for the Yorkshire Evening Post.

The job of junior reporter, doubling as the paper's theatre critic, proved ideal for him. But in 1959 he moved on after he and other journalists had supported printers in an industrial dispute, and he was viewed as a ringleader.

As a feature writer and northern theatre critic for the Guardian in Manchester, he found the experience "inspiring - it was, for me, a sort of university".

Nonetheless, "the rather chilly atmosphere of earnest good work, combined with a total lack of warmth in relationships between management and workers", meant that after two years he had had enough.

In 1961 he joined BBC Radio in Newcastle, as a producer of a programme called Voice of the People, edited by Dick Kelly, who had spotted the potential of the new generation of midget tape recorders, which were to free radio from the formalities of the studio interview. The series was tremendously successful: Kelly used the distance from London and its perceived remoteness from central command to take risks, and employed talented broadcasters such as Alex Glasgow and Harold Williamson to rove across the north-east.

From then on, John came to represent what was best in radio and television, both affable and, when needed, tough.

In 1957 he married Betty Smith, and they had a son, Jo, and daughter, Victoria. Betty and John divorced in 1972. The following year he married Patricia Swift, and they had two sons, Will and Ed. She died in 2003.

For the last 17 years of his life, John was happy with his partner Anne Robson, with whom he had worked in regional radio during the 1960s. She died in 2021.

He is survived by his children and his grandchildren, Joanna, Mary, Jim, Richard, George, Grace and Freddie.

Melvyn Bragg

John Barrie Mapplebeck, television director, born 6 December 1935; died 10 November 2022

"John came to represent what was best in radio and television, both affable and tough

Mapplebeck interviewing the poet Kathleen Raine in 1997
DEREK SMITH

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Other lives

Audrey Maxwell-Timmins

Journalist who was instrumental in helping clergy wives get a better deal after marriage breakdowns

Perhaps the lasting achievement of my mother, Audrey Maxwell-Timmins, who has died aged 101, was the part she played in the creation in 1983 of Broken Rites, which campaigns for the rights of those abandoned when clergy marriages go wrong.

Her involvement followed her personal experience of the way the Methodist church struggled to help when she and my father separated in the 1970s. As a result of the group's campaigning, churches of various denominations now provide better support to spouses when marriages break down, including helping to find housing and working out pension-sharing arrangements.

Audrey was born in Mousehole, Cornwall, to staunch Methodist parents, John Troon, a pharmaceutical company representative, and Agnes (nee Nicholas). The family moved to Bristol, where Audrey went to the Central school and later, as a slip of a 19-year-old, volunteered on the ambulances during the second world war while also working as a shorthand typist at the Ministry of Works. The Methodist connection saw her meet Tim - the Rev Leslie Timmins (nee Maxwell-Timmins) - who was training for the ministry in the city, and they married in 1947.

Audrey Maxwell-Timmins, third from left, at the offices of Therapy magazine in the early 1980s

Having worked for the Bristol department store Maggs, Audrey became a school secretary in the 50s, then taught religious education for a time at Lady Edridge grammar school in south London before moving to the Royal College of Nursing and then the YMCA in public relations roles.

She was also a part-time editor of the Methodist Recorder's women's page in the 60s, and in the 70s became news editor and then editor of Therapy - a weekly newspaper for physio, occupational and other therapists. Though Leslie had never used the Maxwell of his surname, Audrey repurposed it as her journalistic byline.

In 1983, while continuing as a consultant to Therapy, she became the founding director of Vocal, a charity promoting speech therapy. She did not retire until well into her 70s, and it is a tribute to her ability to encourage others and inspire friendship that many of those she worked with remained actively in touch until the end.

> **In the 70s she became editor of Therapy, a weekly newspaper for occupational, physio and other therapists**

Broken Rites was needed because the tied nature of much clergy housing, plus the role that wives were expected to play as unpaid supporters of their husband's ministry (and back then it was only wives), meant that those who were separated could find themselves homeless and potentially in penury. Too often the default stance of the churches was to side, financially and morally, with the ordained.

Audrey got in touch with Frank Field MP, who was already raising the issues. He set up a meeting with her and 25 other separated or divorced wives, and told them they had to organise. Audrey became the first chair of Broken Rites and Lord Field remains its president.

Tim died in 1992. She is survived by her two sons, Jerry and me, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Nicholas Timmins

Fred Smith

Climber and co-founder of the Merseyside Mountaineering Club, attending meetings into his 90s

My friend Fred Smith, who has died aged 96, was an accomplished climber who set up the Merseyside Mountaineering Club with a group of friends in 1958. He was invited to be its first president, and it still thrives today.

Some years before the MMC's foundation, Fred had joined Liverpool's senior climbing club, the Wayfarers, and had partnered, among others, the pioneering rock-climber Peter Harding, making a number of new routes in Snowdonia. He regularly visited the Alps and, accompanied by some of the leading British mountaineers of the day, including Dennis Davis and Ray Colledge, climbed peaks such as the Matterhorn, Täschhorn and Monte Rosa.

During that time Fred also taught basic mountaineering skills to would-be climbers at evening classes, some of whom were women who found they were not allowed to join the Wayfarers. To solve this problem, he and a group of fellow climbers from the evening class decided to establish the MMC.

Fred was born in Bebington, Wirral, to Arthur Smith, a technician at Lever Brothers, and Ada (nee Peers), a nursing sister. He left Bebington secondary school at 14 to take up an apprenticeship at the shipbuilders Cammell Laird, the first of several jobs that provided a background in all things practical. While working as a draughtsman at the Liverpool Telephone Exchange in 1956, he met Bett (Elizabeth) Walker, and they were married the same year.

After working for three years in Malawi as a representative for McConnells, an import/export agency, with Bett's encouragement Fred changed direction by joining the staff of the British Mountaineering Council in 1974 as an administrator.

A year later he moved into commerce, first as a salesman with the mountaineering equipment supplier Karrimor and then as director of his own company, High Places, selling climbing gear. In the early days he had mixed fortunes, until a huge order from the Ministry of Defence for 245,000 pairs of socks proved to be the launchpad for future success.

Across the years Fred continued to go to the mountains whenever he could. He was rock-climbing in southern Spain into his 80s and climbed in Austria and the Dolomites when he was 87. When no longer strong enough, he would walk on local hills. He also maintained an active interest in the MMC, attending its committee meetings into his 90s.

Bett died in 2020. He is survived by their son, Ian, and daughter, Christine.

Paul Davis

Donald Pigott

Botanist and first professor of biology at Lancaster University who set up the National Vegetation Survey

My friend Donald Pigott, who has died aged 94, was the last surviving founding professor of Lancaster University, and as a plant ecologist was influential in setting up the National Vegetation Survey in the 1970s, the first detailed classification of the range of plant species and their distribution within the vegetation types of the British Isles. The results were published in five volumes between 1991 and 2000, and have formed the basis for many other ecological studies.

Donald was born in Sutton, Surrey, to John, a tea importer, and his wife, Helen (nee Lee). His mother taught him to recognise many plant species from an early age, and at Mill Hill school in north London, which was evacuated to Cumbria in the second world war, he developed a fascination with the countryside.

After graduating in botany from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1951, Donald accepted a lectureship in botany at Sheffield University, where he became an expert on the vegetation of Upper Teesdale in County Durham, now a national nature reserve. In 1960 he returned to Cambridge University as a lecturer in botany. Four years later he was appointed to the new Lancaster University, where he led the creation of a pioneering degree in ecology.

In 1975 he instigated the National Vegetation Survey under his own supervision, and in 1977 he was involved in a campaign to save the limestone pavements at Gait Barrows in Cumbria, resulting in the area being designated a national nature reserve.

Donald returned to Cambridge in 1984 as director of the Cambridge University Botanic Garden, which was then under threat from cost savings. He fought successfully to secure its long-term future and even presided over the opening of a fine new tropical house there. Around that time he also served on the council of the National Trust (1980-86).

Among his many interests, Donald had a comprehensive knowledge of lime trees, which led in 2012 to his book Lime-Trees and Basswoods, illustrated with his beautifully accurate drawings. In retirement in the Lake District from 1995 onwards, his fine garden included an arboretum of limes. He kept up with his academic interests until the end, and his final research paper was published in 2020 at the age of 92.

Donald is survived by his second wife, Sheila (nee Megaw), whom he married in 1986, by a daughter, Julia, from his first marriage to Margaret (nee Beatson), who died in 1981, and by Sheila's two daughters from a previous marriage, Bridget and Ruth.

John Whittaker

Puzzles

Sudoku

The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9.

Easy

		6	4	2	7	8		
	3	5				4	7	
	2		8	7	4		9	
	4		2		6		1	
	7		5	3	1		6	
	6	2				9	5	
		7	6	4	2	3		

Medium

				2			6	
						1	4	
			5		6	8		3
		5			8	3		6
1								
		3	2				8	7
	3	1	8				5	9
8	6				3	2		
		4	1		7	6		

Expert

	8		6				2	
			7					
	9	2				6		1
3					7	5		
7	4						9	
5					8	2		
	6	1				4		9
			2					
	7		4				8	

Futoshiki Easy

Fill in the grid so that every row and column contains the numbers 1-5. The "greater than" or "less than" signs indicate where a number is larger or smaller than its neighbour.

□		□		□		□		□
v						^		
□		□		□		□	<	□
v						v		
□		□		4		□		3
		v		v				
□		□	>	□	>	2		□
		v		v				^
□		□	>	□		□	>	□

Kids Word search

Find all the listed words relating to boxing in the grid, reading in straight lines, up, down or diagonally, either backwards or forwards.

BOXER, CANVAS, COUNT, CROWD, FIGHT, FISTS, GLOVES, HOOK, INJURY, JUDGE, RING, ROUND, STANCE, WATER

T	N	U	O	C	K	O	O	H
L	R	B	Y	E	G	D	U	J
K	E	I	S	T	A	N	C	E
R	X	N	F	I	S	T	S	C
R	O	J	R	V	A	E	F	R
E	B	U	X	I	V	L	I	O
T	S	R	N	O	N	E	G	W
A	A	Y	L	D	A	G	H	D
W	E	G	L	I	C	A	T	S

Kids Countdown

Can you work out the answers to the sums below?

Easy	Medium	Hard
7	**35**	**96**
+ 29	+ 45	*25% of it*
÷ 9	*3/4 of it*	+ 87
+ 20	+ 44	*Third of it*
Half of it	*Quarter of it*	+ 132
+ 23	*- 18*	÷ 13
÷ 7	× 8	× 10
× 8	+ 29	*- 56*
- 10	*Third of it*	*Half of it*
÷ 3	+ 23	*- 29*
Answer	Answer	Answer

Solutions

Kids Countdown

Easy **10**
Medium **54**
Hard **8**

Sudoku *Easy*

7	8	4	3	6	5	1	2	9
1	9	6	4	2	7	8	3	5
2	3	5	9	1	8	4	7	6
6	2	1	8	7	4	5	9	3
5	4	3	2	9	6	7	1	8
8	7	9	5	3	1	2	6	4
4	6	2	1	8	3	9	5	7
9	5	7	6	4	2	3	8	1
3	1	8	7	5	9	6	4	2

Sudoku *Medium*

9	1	8	3	2	4	7	6	5
3	5	6	7	8	9	1	4	2
4	7	2	5	1	6	8	9	3
2	4	5	9	7	8	3	1	6
1	8	7	6	3	5	9	2	4
6	9	3	2	4	1	5	8	7
7	3	1	8	6	2	4	5	9
8	6	9	4	5	3	2	7	1
5	2	4	1	9	7	6	3	8

Sudoku *Expert*

1	8	7	6	9	4	3	2	5
6	5	3	7	2	1	9	4	8
4	9	2	5	8	3	6	7	1
3	2	8	9	6	7	5	1	4
7	4	6	1	5	2	8	9	3
5	1	9	3	4	8	2	6	7
2	6	1	8	7	5	4	3	9
8	3	4	2	1	9	7	5	6
9	7	5	4	3	6	1	8	2

Futoshiki

4		1		5		3		2
v						^		
3		2		1		4	<	5
v						v		
2		5		4		1		3
		v		v				
5		4	>	3	>	2		1
		v		v				^
1		3	>	2		5	>	4

Kids Word search

T	N	U	O	C	K	O	O	H
L	R	B	Y	E	G	D	U	J
K	E	I	S	T	A	N	C	E
R	X	N	F	I	S	T	S	C
R	O	J	R	V	A	E	F	R
E	B	U	X	I	V	L	I	O
T	S	R	N	O	N	E	G	W
A	A	Y	L	D	A	G	H	D
W	E	G	L	I	C	A	T	S

Puzzles

Yesterday's solutions

Killer sudoku
Easy

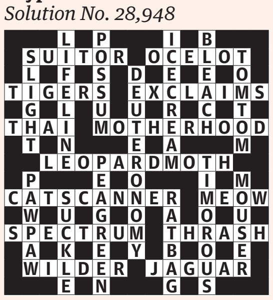
2	3	5	1	7	9	8	4	6
7	4	8	5	6	3	2	9	1
9	1	6	4	2	8	3	7	5
6	7	1	3	4	2	5	8	9
8	5	3	7	9	1	4	6	2
4	9	2	6	8	5	7	1	3
3	8	7	9	5	6	1	2	4
5	6	4	2	1	7	9	3	8
1	2	9	8	3	4	6	5	7

Medium

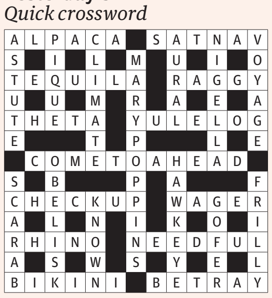
1	3	6	7	9	2	4	5	8
5	9	4	1	8	6	2	3	7
2	7	8	4	5	3	1	9	6
3	8	7	9	4	1	5	6	2
4	2	9	3	6	5	8	7	1
6	1	5	8	2	7	3	4	9
8	4	3	2	7	9	6	1	5
7	6	1	5	3	8	9	2	4
9	5	2	6	1	4	7	8	3

Codeword

Cryptic crossword
Solution No. 28,948



Yesterday's
Quick crossword

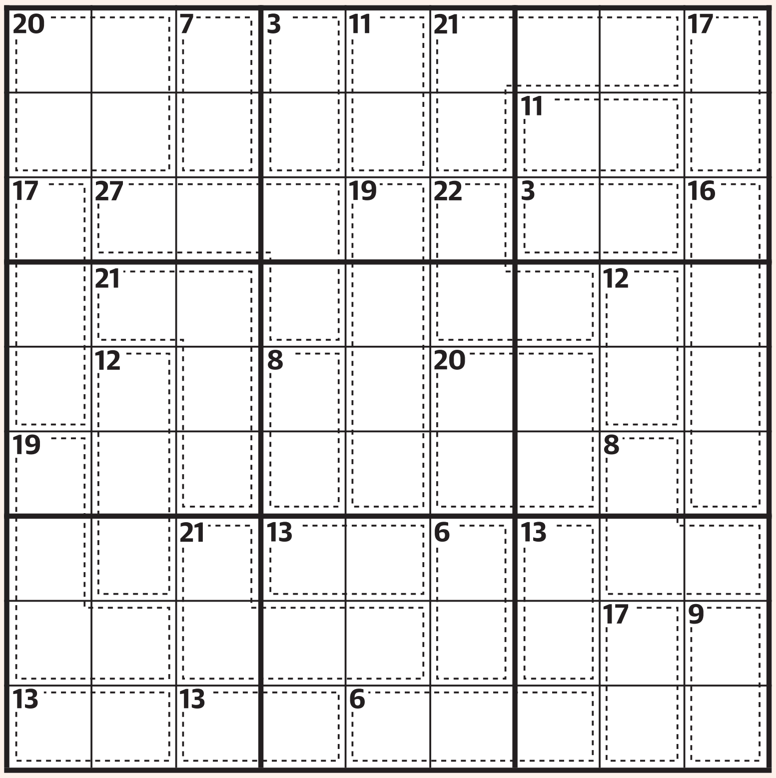


Want more? Get access to more than 4,000 puzzles at **theguardian.com/crossword**. To buy puzzle books, visit **guardianbookshop.com** or call **0330 333 6846**.*

Killer sudoku

Easy No 845

The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.



Chris Maslanka's puzzles

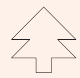
Pyrgic puzzles

1 Christmas – a time free of stress and strife! Yet Pedanticus has already quarreled with the vicar over the song-sheet for the carol service. Among the old stalwarts was listed *God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen*. What about it annoyed the old curmudgeon?

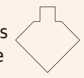
2 Andy was able to guess one solution to the equation in this question:

Show that $2a^3 - 3a^2 = 4$ has only one real solution.

But how could he prove it was the only (real) solution? Luckily Candy had an idea. What did she suggest?



3 Cut this silhouette of a Christmas tree into 3 pieces that will rearrange to make the outline of a bauble.



4 Hercule Poireau has locked his pudding in the safe. He knows it is a 14-digit combination consisting of two 7s separated by 7 digits, two 6s separated by 6 digits, and so on all the way down to a pair of 1s with a single digit between. The first digit is 1 and the last is 4, but the rest is a bit of a blur.

1 - - - - - - - - - - - - 4

He'll share the pudding if you can help. Well?

5 What the postie has to put up with! One smart-ass thought it was amusing to address his parcel: *To the only house in Christmas Close the digits of whose number multiply to 5 times what they sum to.* What is the house number? Assuming the houses are numbered 1, 2, 3… and so on, what is the highest house number there could be in the close?

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Wordplay

Wordpool
In each case find the correct definition:

XENIUM
a) former name of xenon
b) foreign stay
c) the visit of the Three Kings
d) gift to ambassador

XENURINE
a) of pilgrimage
b) innkeeper
c) armadillo
d) colour of healthy metabolic waste

XANTHOMETER
a) chromometer for lake water
b) yellow filter
c) device for measuring thickness of ice
d) eel counter

Dropouts
Replace each asterisk by a letter to complete the word:

*R*I*C*K*

E Pluribus Unum
Rearrange the letters of MOTEL SITE to make a single word.

3-4-5
Is she a clingy climber? (3)
The Three Kings in one's imagination (4)
Buddy can be prickly (5)

Cracker Barrel
What do dogs do that people step into?
What do you get if you cross a snowman and a vampire?

Missing Links
Find a word which follows the first word in the clue and precedes the second in each case making a fresh word or phrase. E.g. the answer to *fish mix* could be *cake* (fish*cake* & *cake* mix) and to *bat man* it could be *he* (bathe & *he*-man)…
a) Christmas barrel
b) cold food
c) general rate
d) power price
e) holly joint
f) white stocking

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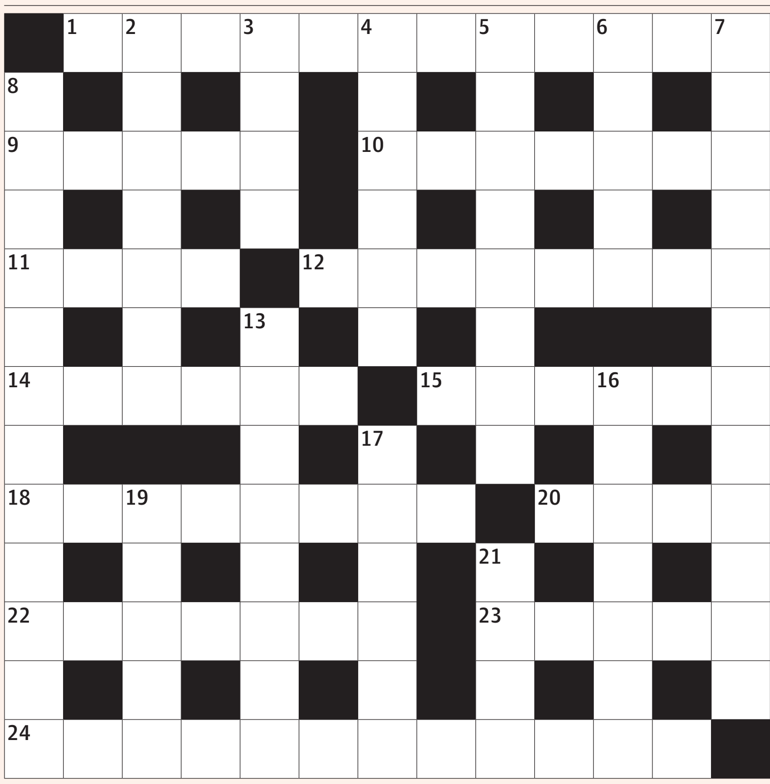
Quick crossword no 16,422



Across
1 Christmas carol (4,3,5)
9 Party leader (5)
10 Piece of music (7)
11 Coward — time for festivities (4)
12 Dancer, say (8)
14 Y, say (6)
15 Seasonal decoration (6)
18 Opened eg champagne (8)
20 Alternative to meat (4)
22 They get roasted at this time of year (7)
23 Treetop adornment (5)
24 Caveats (12)

Down
2 eg Chinese (7)
3 Another party's first and current leader (4)
4 Stinging insect (6)
5 Piece of torn skin (8)
6 Lord (5)
7 In a slanderous manner (12)
8 Seasonal sweet food (6,6)
13 I agree! (4,4)
16 Kind of wedding (which goes off with a bang?) (7)
17 Entertaining 2 female companion (6)
19 They present seasonal greetings (5)
21 Seasonal visitors (4)